اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا ۙ

Quran English Translation and Tafseer
Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

Surah 17-Bani Israeel (Al-Isra)

سُوْرَةُ بَنِيْ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ (أَسْرَى) مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate**)**

سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِيْٓ اَسْرٰى بِعَبْدِهٖ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ اِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْاَقْصَا الَّذِيْ بٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهٗ لِنُرِيَهٗ مِنْ اٰيٰتِنَا ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْبَصِيْرُ ۱

(17-1) Holy is He Who carried His servant by night from the Holy Mosque (in Makkah) to the farther Mosque (in Jerusalem) whose surroundings We have blessed that We might show him some of Our Signs. (1) Indeed He alone is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

(1) The event referred to in this verse is known Miraj and Isra. According to authentic traditions, this took place a year before Hijrah. In the traditional and biographical literature, its details have been related by a large number (25) of the companions. Anas bin Malik, Malik bin Saasaah, Abuzar Ghifari, and Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with them all) have related details of the event. Besides them, Umar, Ali, Abdullah bin Masud (Allah be pleased with them) have also related some parts of this event.

In this verse, the Quran mentions only a part of the Journey, i.e. from Masjid-i-Haram to the Temple at Jerusalem. The object of this journey as stated here was that Allah willed to show His servant some of His signs. The Quran does not give any details other than this but we find further details in the traditions, which are to this effect:

One night the Angel Jibril took Prophet (peace be upon him) on al-Buraq from Masjid-i-Haram to Masjid-i-Aqsa (the Temple). There the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered his prayers along with the other Prophets. Then he took him towards the higher spheres, where he met some of the great Prophets in

different spheres. At last he reached the Highest Place in the Heavens, and was received in audience by Allah. It was there that, besides other important instructions, five daily Prayers were prescribed. Then he returned to the Temple and from there came back to Masjid-i-Haram. During this Journey, according to many traditions, Paradise and Hell were shown to him. We also learn from authentic traditions that on the following day when he mentioned this event, the disbelievers of Makkah scoffed at him, and some of the Muslims also were skeptical about this.

The above additional details based on the traditions cannot be said to be against the Quran, for these are additions to the details given in the Quran; therefore, the details related in the traditions cannot be rejected on the plea that they are against the Quran. Nevertheless, if one rejects any part of those details which are given in the traditions, one cannot be declared a renegade. On the other hand, if one rejects the details given in the Quran, one does become a renegade.

There are different versions of this journey. Some say that this happened in a dream, while others are of the opinion that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was fully awake and went on the journey with his own physical body. Some others say that it was merely a mystic vision which was shown to him. The opening words of this verse: “Glorified be He who took for a journey His servant” however, clearly show that it was a supernatural event which was brought about by the unlimited power of Allah. It is quite obvious that if the event had been merely a mystic vision, it would not have been introduced by the words which imply that the Being Who brought about this event is free from each and every kind of weakness and defect. Again the words “took His servant by night” also show that this was not a dream or a vision but a physical journey in which Allah arranged that the Prophet (peace be upon him) should make observation of His signs with his physical eyes. Therefore, one is bound to admit that this was not a mere spiritual experience but a physical journey and visual observation which Allah arranged for His Prophet (peace be upon him).

It is strange that some people are of the opinion that this extraordinary journey could not be possible, but now when man with his very limited power has been able to reach the moon, it is absurd to deny that Allah with His limitless power could enable His Messenger (peace be upon him) to make this journey in the extraordinary short time it took.

Above all, the question whether a thing is possible or not, can arise only in the case of human beings whose powers are after all limited, but such questions cannot be raised where the All-Powerful Allah is concerned. Only such a person who does not believe that Allah is able to do everything can raise objections against this wonderful journey about which Allah Himself says that He took His servant one night from Masjid-i-Haram to Masjid-i-Aqsa. Likewise all the objections raised against the various details which are given in the traditions are frivolous, except two, which are plausible:

First, if we accept these details, then we shall have to admit that Allah is confined to a certain place: otherwise there was no need that His servant should be taken for this purpose to a certain place. Secondly, according to traditions, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was enabled to observe Paradise and Hell where he saw some people suffering from torment. The objection is: why should some people be awarded punishments or rewards before the final judgment after Resurrection?

As regards to the first objection, it is true that Allah is Infinite by Himself, but in dealing with His creation, He employs those means which suit His creation not because of any limitation of His, but because of the limitations of His creation. For instance, when He speaks to any of His creature, He adopts the same limited mode of conversation as the addressee can understand, though He has limitless modes of speech. Likewise, when He desires to show some of the wonderful signs of His kingdom to a servant. He takes him to the place where the signs are to be shown. It is obvious that the servant cannot see at one and the same time the entire universe as Allah does, for Allah has no need to go to any place at all for this purpose but the servant has. The

same applies to the appearance of the servant before the Creator. Though Allah is not confined to any locality, it is necessary for the servant to go to the place where His manifestations have been concentrated for his observation because it is not possible for the servant with his limited powers to go in His Presence in His Infinite capacity.

As regards to the second objection, it is based on the lack of understanding the thing: many of the signs which were shown to the Prophet (peace be upon him) were symbolic. For instance, a small hole from which a fat ox came out but could not go back into it, represented mischief personified. In the same way the adulterers were shown as if they had fresh meat before them but instead of that they were eating rotten flesh. Similarly punishments for evil deeds shown to him were only symbolic observations of the punishments in the Hereafter so that he might see in advance the things which would take place in the Hereafter.

In regard to the Miraj it should be kept in view that all the Prophets were enabled by Allah to see His signs in the heavens and the earth according to their ranks. And for this purpose all the material curtains were lifted so that they could see with their naked eyes the unseen realities, to which they were required to invite the people.

This was done so that the Prophets could say with full conviction what they had seen with their own eyes. For this experience would distinguish them from a philosopher who bases all his theories on guesswork and cannot say that he bears witness to what he claims. In contrast to philosophers, Prophets could say that they bore witness to the things which they presented because they had seen them with their own eyes.

وَاٰتَيۡنَا مُوۡسَى الۡكِتٰبَ وَجَعَلۡنٰهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِىۡۤ اِسۡرَآءِيۡلَ اَلَّا تَتَّخِذُوۡا مِنۡ دُوۡنِىۡ وَكِيۡلًا ۝٢

(17-2) We gave Moses the Book, and made it a source of guidance for the Children of Israel, [2] commanding: "Take no other Guardian beside Me." [3]

(2) As this verse has no apparent connection with the event of Miraj, it may appear to a cursory reader that either of the two verses has been misplaced here. But if we try to understand the matter in the context of the theme of the whole Surah, we can easily understand the connection between the two. The main object of this Surah is to give a warning to the disbelievers of Makkah. That is why the mention of Miraj has been made in the very first verse, as if to say: The person whom you dub as an impostor and reject the Book sent down to him, has just now seen with his naked eyes great signs of Allah. So you should learn a lesson from the history of the Israelites who discarded the Book of Allah and therefore, were given painful punishment.

(3) The Arabic word vakil (guardian) denotes a person who is trustworthy and can be depended upon in regard to his affairs and may be turned to for guidance and help.

ذُرِّيَّ ۚ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوْحٍ ۗاِنَّهٗ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُوْرًا ﴿٣﴾

(17-3) You are the descendants of those whom We carried (in the Ark) with Noah. (4) He was truly a thankful servant.

(4) That is, you are the descendants of Noah (peace be upon him) and his companions; therefore, you should behave in a manner as behooves such people. You should make Allah alone as your Guardian, for your ancestors escaped death from the flood only because they had made Allah their Guardian.

وَقَضَيْنَآ اِلٰى بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَاۤءِيْلَ فِى الْكِتٰبِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِى الْاَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَتَعْلُنَّ عُلُوًّا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٤﴾

(17-4) Then We clearly declared to the Children of Israel in the Book: (5) "Twice you will make mischief in the land and will commit transgression." (6)

(5) The original Arabic word Al-kitab does not stand here for the Torah but for all the divine Books.

(6) Such warnings have been given in different Books of the Bible. As regards to their first mischief and its evil consequences, the Israelites were warned in the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel and the warnings about their second mischief and its severe punishments are found in Matthew and Luke. Given below are some extracts to confirm this statement of the Quran.

Prophet David was the first to warn the Israelites in his Psalms of their first mischief:

They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them. But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters. Therefore, was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen;

Psalms: Chapter 106, vv. 34-38, 40, 41. The above events have been described in the past tense as if they had already actually happened. The Scriptures employ this mode of expression to emphasize the importance of the prophesies.

When this mischief actually came to pass, Prophet Isaiah warned them of its ruinous consequences: Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken anymore? Ye will revolt more and more: How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: everyone loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. Therefore, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel. Ah I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers. Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made: Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore, the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn: and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground. Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore, this

iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a shred to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit. (Isaiah, Chapter 1: verses 4-5, 21-24; Chapter 2: verses 6,8; Chapter 3: verses 16-17, 25-26; Chapter 8: verse 7; Chapter 30: verses 9-10, 12-14). After this Prophet Jeremiah raised his voice when the flood of corruption swept away everything before it.

Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity and are become vain?

And I brought you into a plentiful country to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination. For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy hands: and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot. As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed: they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets, Saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us. But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? Let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble; for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah. The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? She is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with sticks. Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if can find a man, if there be

any that executeth judgments that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it. How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbor's wife. Shall I not visit for these things? Saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understand what they say. Their quiver is an open sepulchre, they are all mighty men. And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds; they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword. And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.

And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord; Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy. (Jeremiah, Chapter 2: verses 5-7, 20, 26-28; Chapter 3: verses 6-9; Chapter 5: verses 1, 7-9 15-17; Chapter 7: verses 33, 34; Chapter 15: verses 2, 3).

Then Prophet Ezekiel was raised to warn them in time. Addressing Jerusalem he said:
The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself. Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood. In thee they have set light by father and mother: in

the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow. Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my Sabbaths. In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness. In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution. And one hath committed abomination with his neighbor's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter. In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbors by extortion and hast forgotten me, can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee. And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thyself in the sight of the heathen, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." (Ezekiel, Chapter 22: verses 3, 6-12, 14-16).

Besides the above mentioned warnings which were given to Israelites at the time of their first mischief, Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) warned them of the consequences of their second great mischief. In a forceful address he criticized their morel degeneration like this:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gatherth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. (Matthew, Chapter 23: verses 37, 38; Chapter 24: verse 2).

Then, when the Roman officials were taking Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) out for crucifixion, and a great company of people including women were following him bewailing and lamenting, he addressed them and gave his final warnings:

But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say; Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, fall on us; and to the hills, cover us. (Luke, Chapter 23: verses 2830).

فَإِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ أُولَىٰهُمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَّنَا أُولِي بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ فَجَاسُوا خِلَالَ الدِّيَارِ ۚ وَكَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُولًا ۝٥

(17-5) So, when the occasion for the first of the transgressions arrived, We raised against you some of Our creatures who were full of might, and they ran over the whole of your land. This was a promise that was bound to be fulfilled. (7)

(7) This refers to the terrible destruction that the Israelites suffered at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians. One cannot fully appreciate the historical background of this merely from the extracts that have been reproduced above from the Books of the Prophets. A brief history of the Israelites is also needed so that a student may become acquainted with all the causes and circumstances on account of which Allah removed this nation, that professed to believe in a revealed Book, from the leadership of mankind and turned it into a humiliated, condemned and backward community.

After the death of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) when the Israelites entered Palestine, it was inhabited by the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzittes, Hivites, Jebusites, the Philistines, etc. These communities had adopted the worst kind of idolatry, their supreme deity being Ayl whom they regarded as the father of gods and who was usually represented by the bull images. His consort was called Asherah from whom had descended a whole line of gods and goddesses, about 70 in number. The most powerful god among them was Baal who was regarded as the god of rain and growth and the lord of the earth and heavens. In the northern regions his consort was called Anathoth and in Palestine Ashtaroth. These two were the

goddesses of love and procreation. Besides them, there was a god of death, a god of disease and famine, and a goddess of health, and thus all the worldly powers and agencies stood divided among a large number of deities. The people had ascribed such dirty and base qualities and acts to these deities that even a worst offender against morality would shun being known by them. Obviously the people who have adopted such mean deities for worship and devotion cannot remain secure from the worst kind of moral degeneration and the modern excavations have shown this conclusively.

Child sacrifice was a common thing among them. Their places of worship had turned into brothels, where women were kept as religious prostitutes and illicit relations with them were regarded as a part of worship and devotion.

The Israelites had clearly been told in the instructions given in the Torah that they should destroy those communities and wrest the land of Palestine from them, and that they should avoid mixing up with those people and ward off their moral and ideological weaknesses.

But when the Israelites entered Palestine they set this guidance aside. They not only did not establish a united kingdom of their own but fell a prey to tribal parochialism. Each of their tribes was content to take a part of the captured land and become a separate and independent state. This disunity among them did not leave any of the tribes strong enough to purge its territory completely of the idolaters, and therefore they had to allow them to live side by side with them in the same land. Not only this, but there had remained in the conquered territories a number of small cities of these idolatrous communities which the Israelites had not been able to subjugate. It is this very thing which has been complained against in the extract of the Psalms reproduced above in the beginning of (E.N. 6).

The first consequence of intermixing with those communities was that the Israelites also became idolatrous, and gradually began to adopt other moral evils also. This has been

complained about in the Book of Judges as below: And the children of Israel did evil, in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim. And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. (Judges, 2: 11-13).

The second consequence suffered by the Israelites was that the communities whose cities they had left unconquered and the Philistines whose land they had not at all touched set up a united front against them and drove them out of a major part of Palestine by incessant attacks, so much so that they deprived them of the Holy Ark of their Lord. At last, the Israelites felt the need of establishing a united kingdom of their own under one ruler, and on their request Prophet Samuel appointed Saul as their king in 1020 B.C. (For details see (Ayats 246-248 and E.Ns. 268-270 of Surah Al-Baqarah).
This united kingdom was ruled by three kings: Saul (1020 B.C. to 1004 B.C.), Prophet David (1004 to 965 B.C.) and Prophet Solomon (365 to 926 B.C.). These kings brought to completion the mission that had been left incomplete by the Israelites after the death of Prophet Moses (Peace be upon the all). They annexed all the territories except the Phoenician state on the northern and the Philistine state on the southern coast, which of course became tributaries.

After the death of Prophet Solomon the Israelites again adopted the ways of the world and fought among themselves and split into two independent kingdoms, the kingdom of Israel in the northern Palestine and Jordan with Samaria as its capital, and the kingdom of Judah in the southern Palestine and Edom with Jerusalem as its capital. These kingdoms were strife ridden from the very beginning and this state of affairs persisted till the end.

The rulers and people of the kingdom of Israel were the first to be affected grievously by the ideological and moral weaknesses of the neighboring communities. Specially, after the marriage of its ruler Ahab with the idolatrous princess Jezebel of

Zidon, idolatry and other evils began to spread unchecked among the Israelites under the official patronage. Prophets Elias and Elisha tried their very best to check this deluge but the Israelites, who were rapidly degenerating, did not heed their warning. At last the wrath of Allah overtook the kingdom of Israel in the shape of the Assyrians who started subjecting Palestine to incessant attacks from 900 B.C. downward. During this period, Prophet Amos (787-747 B.C.) and then Prophet Hosea (747- 735 B.C.) rose and warned the Israelites again and again, but the wretched depraved people did not heed their warnings at all and transgressed all limits. Prophet Amos was banished by the king of Israel from the realm of Samaria and warned not to preach his mission in the country Not very long after this the wrath of Allah burst upon the kingdom of Israel and its people. The Assyrian king Sargon took Samaria in 721 B.C. and put an end to this northern kingdom. Thousands of Israelites were put to the sword and twenty seven thousand of their leading men were driven out of their homeland and scattered in the eastern districts of the Assyrian empire and replaced by settlers from other parts of the empire. When the remaining Israelites intermixed with the settlers, they also lost gradually their national and cultural identity.

The other kingdom of the Israelites, called the kingdom of Judah, which was set up in southern Palestine also began to adopt godless ways soon after the death of Prophet Solomon, though its moral degeneration took place at a slower pace than that of Israel. Therefore, it was allowed to exist for a longer period. Then, like the kingdom of Israel, it also began to be subjected to continual attacks, its cities ruined and its capital besieged, but this kingdom could not be wholly destroyed by the Assyrians, it only became a tributary. Afterwards, when in spite of the best reformatory efforts of Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah the people of Judah did not give up idol worship and other moral evils, king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked and captured the whole of Judah in 598 B.C. including Jerusalem and took the king of Judah as prisoner. Even then the Israelites did not mend their ways and paid no heed to the warnings and guidance of Prophet Jeremiah. Instead of reforming their ways, they started making

plans to change their fate by revolting against Babylon. At last in 587 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar punished them heavily by invading Judah and destroyed all its important cities. He razed Jerusalem and Solomon’s Temple to the ground and did not leave a wall of it standing in place. He drove a large part of the Israelite population out of their land and scattered them into the adjoining countries. The people who were left behind were cursed and subjected to all kinds of humiliations by the neighboring communities.

This was the first calamity that came as a warning to the Israelites and the first chastisement that they suffered as a result therof.

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّ عَلَيْهِمْ وَاَمْدَدْنٰكُمْ بِاَمْوٰلٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ وَجَعَلْنٰكُمْ اَكْثَرَ نَفِيْرًا

(17-6) Then We granted you an upper hand against them, and strengthened you with wealth and children, and multiplied your numbers. (8)

(8) This refers to the lease of time that the Israelites (That is the people of Judah) got after their release from the captivity of Babylon. As for the people of Israel and Samaria, they did not rise again after their moral and spiritual degeneration. But among the people of Judah there still were some people who practiced the truth and invited others also to follow it. They carried on their work of invitation to the truth among the remaining Israelites in Judah and also exhorted those who had been driven out into Babylon and other lands to repent and follow the truth. At last the mercy of Allah came to their help. The downfall of Babylon started. The Persian king, Cyrus, took Babylon in 539 B.C. and in the following year issued a decree allowing the Israelites to return to and resettle in their homeland. The Israelites began to return home in caravan after caravan, and this continued for a long time. Cyrus also allowed the Israelites to rebuild the Temple of Solomon but the neighboring communities who had settled in this land resisted it. At last Darfius appointed Zerubbabel, a grandson of the last king of Judah as the governor of Judah in 522 B.C., who got the Temple rebuilt under the care of Prophet Haggai, Prophet Zechariah and Joshua. In 458 B.C. Ezra arrived in Judah along with an exiled group and the Persian king Artaxerxes made the following decree:

And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not.

And whosoever will not do the law of thy God and the law of the king let judgment be executed speedily upon him whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment. (Ezra, 7:25-26).

Taking advantage of this decree, Ezra carried out the revival of the religion of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). He gathered together all the righteous and good people from the Israelites and set up a strong organization. He compiled and spread the Pentateuch which contained the Torah, made arrangements for the religious education of the Israelites, enforced the law and started purging the people of moral and ideological weaknesses which they had adopted by intermixing with the other communities. He compelled the Jews to divorce the idolatrous wives they had married, and took a covenant from them that they would worship God alone and follow His law only.

In 455 B.C. an exiled group came back to Judah under Nehemiah whom the Persian king appointed as the ruler of Jerusalem and ordered him to build the wall round the city. Thus, after 150 years the Holy city was fully restored and became the center of Jewish religion and culture, But the Israelites of northern Palestine, and Samaria did not benefit from the work of revival done by Ezra. They built a rival sanctuary on Mount Gerizim and tried to make it the religious center for the people of the Book. This caused a further, and perhaps the final, split between the Jews and the Samaritans.

The Jews suffered a setback for a while with the fall of the Persian Empire and the conquests of Alexander the Great and the rise of the Greeks. After the death of Alexander, his kingdom was subdivided into three empires. Syria fell to the lot of the Seleucide empire, with Antioch as its capital, whose ruler Antiochus III incorporated Palestine into his dominions in 198 B.C. These Greek conquerors who were idolatrous by precept and freelance morally felt greatly ill at ease with the Jewish religion and culture. So, they began to propagate the rival Greek way of life and culture by political and economic pressure, and were able to win over a strong section of the Israelites who became their helpers. This external interference caused a split in the Jewish nation. One group among them readily adopted the Greek dress, the Greek language, the Greek way of life and the Greek sports, while the other persistently stuck to their own culture and way of life.

In 175 B.C. when Antiochus IV (who was called Epiphanes, that is, the manifestation of God) came to the throne, he used all his power and authority to stamp out the Jewish religion and culture. He got idols installed in the Holy Temple at Jerusalem and forced the Jews to prostrate themselves before them. He strictly forbade the rite of offering the sacrifices at the altar, and commanded the Jews to offer sacrifices to idolatrous deities instead. He proposed death penalty for those who would keep the Torah in their houses, or observe the Sabbath or perform circumcision of their children. But the Jews did not yield to this coercion, and started a powerful resistance movement, known in history as the revolt of the Maccabees. Though in this struggle the sympathies of the Greeck oriented Jews were with the Greeks, and they fully cooperated with the despots of Antioch to crush the Maccabean revolt, the common Jews who still retained the religious fervor of the days of Ezra sided with the Maccabees, who were ultimately able to drive out the Greeks and establish a free religious state which remained in power till 67 B.C This state prospered and in time extended to all those territories which had once been under the control the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. It was able to annex a part of the land of the Philistines which had remained unconquered even in the days of Prophets David and Solomon (Peace be upon them).

This is the historical background of the verse of the Quran under commentary.

اِنْ اَحْسَنْتُمْ اَحْسَنْتُمْ لِاَنْفُسِكُمْ وَ اِنْ اَسَاْتُمْ فَلَهَا فَاِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ الْاٰخِرَةِ لِيَسُوْٓءٗا وُجُوْهَكُمْ وَ لِيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوْهُ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَّ لِيُتَبِّرُوْا مَا عَلَوْا تَتْبِيْرًا ۷

(17-7) Whenever you did good, it was to your own advantage; and whenever you committed evil, it was to your own disadvantage. So, when the time of the fulfilment of the second promise arrived, (We raised other enemies that would) disfigure your faces and enter the Temple (of Jerusalem) as they had entered the first time, and destroy whatever they could lay their hands on. (9)

(9) The historical background of the second degeneration and its chastisement is as follows: The moral and religious fervor with which the Maccabees had started their movement gradually cooled down and was replaced by love of the world and empty external form. A split appeared among them and they themselves invited the Roman General, Pompey, to come to Palestine. Pompey turned his attention to this land in 63 B.C. By taking Jerusalem he put an end to the political freedom of the Jews. But the Roman conquerors preferred to rule their dominions through the agency of the local chiefs rather than by direct control. Therefore, a local government was set up in Palestine which eventually passed into the hand of Herod, a clever Jew, in 40 B.C. This ruler is well known as Herod the Great. He ruled over the entire Palestine and Jordan from 40 to 4 B.C. On the one hand, Herod patronized the religious leaders to please the Jews, and on the other, he propagated the Roman culture and won the goodwill of Caesar by showing his loyalty and faithfulness to the Roman Empire. During, his reign, the Jews degenerated and fell to the lowest ebb of moral and religious life.

On the death of Herod his kingdom was subdivided into three parts. His son, Archelaus, became the ruler of Samaria, Judea and northern Edom. In A.D. 6, however, Caesar Augustus deprived him of his authority and put the state under his Roman governor, and this arrangement continued up till A.D. 41. This was precisely the time when Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) appeared to reform the Israelites whose religious leaders opposed

him tooth and nail and even tried to get him the death sentence by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

The second son of Herod, Herod Antipas, became the ruler of Galilee and Jordan in northern Palestine, and he was the person who got Prophet Yahya (John) (Peace be upon him) beheaded at the request and desire of a dancing girl. Herod's third son, Philip, succeeded to the territories bounded on one side by river Yermuk and on the other by Mount Hermon. Philip had been much more deeply influenced by the Roman and Greek cultures than his father and brothers. Therefore the preaching of the truth could not have even so much effect in his land as it had in the other parts of Palestine.

In A.D. 41, the Romans appointed Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, ruler of the territories that had once been under Herod himself. Coming into power this man did whatever he could to persecute the followers of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and used all the forces at his disposal to crush the movement that was functioning under the guidance of the disciples to inculcate fear of God in the people and reform their morals.

In order to have a correct estimate of the condition of the common Jews and their religious leaders, one should study the criticisms leveled by Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) on them in his sermons contained in the four Gospels. Even a religious man like Prophet John (peace be upon him) was beheaded before their eyes and not a voice was raised in protest against this barbarity. Then all the religious leaders of the community unanimously demanded death sentence for Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), and none but a few righteous men were there to mourn this depravity. Above all, when Pontius Pilate asked these depraved people, which condemned prisoner he should release, according to the custom, at Passover, Jesus or Barabbas the robber, they all cried with one voice Barabbas. This was indeed the last chance Allah gave to the Jews, and then their fate was sealed.

Not long after this, a serious conflict started between the Jews and the Romans, which developed into an open revolt by the former between A.D. 64 and 66. Both Herod Agrippa II and the Roman procurator Floris failed to put down the rebellion. At last, the Romans crushed it by a strong military action and in A.D. 70 Titus took Jerusalem by force. About 133000 people were put to the sword. Sixty seven thousand made slaves, and thousands sent to work in the Egyptian mines and to other cities so that they could be used in amphitheaters for being torn by wild beasts or become the practice target for the sword fighters. All the tall and beautiful girls were picked out for the army of conquest and the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Temple were pulled down to the ground. After this the Jewish influence so disappeared from Palestine that the Jews could not regain power for two thousand years and the Holy Temple could never be rebuilt. Afterwards the Roman Emperor, Hadrian, restored Jerusalem but renamed it Aelia. The Jews, however, were not allowed to enter it for centuries. This was the calamity that the Jews suffered on account of their degeneration for the second time.

عَسٰى رَبُّكُمْ اَنْ يَّرْحَمَكُمْ ۚ وَ اِنْ عُدْتُّمْ عُدْنَا ۘ وَ جَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ حَصِيْرًا ۝٨

(17-8) Your Lord may well show Mercy to you, but if you revert to your evil behaviour, We shall revert to chastising you. We have made Hell a prison for those who are thankless (10) of Allah's bounties.

(10) Though this admonition has been given as a parenthesis at the end of the address to the children of Israel, it does not mean that this and the address itself are solely meant for them. As a matter of fact, the whole address is really directed towards the disbelievers of Makkah but, instead of addressing them directly, some important historical events from the history of the children of Israel have been cited in order to serve as admonition for them.

اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا ۝٩

(17-9) Verily this Qur'an guides to the Way that is the Straight most. To those who believe in it, and do righteous works, it gives the good news that a great reward awaits them,

وَّاَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ اَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ۝١٠

(17-10) and warns those who do not believe in the Hereafter that We have prepared for them a grievous chastisement. (11)

(11) This means to warn those persons or people or nations who do not take a lesson from the admonitions of the Quran to be ready to undergo that chastisement which Israelites had to suffer.

وَيَدْعُ الْاِنْسَانُ بِالشَّرِّ دُعَآءَهٗ بِالْخَيْرِ ۭ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ عَجُوْلًا ۝١١

(17-11) Man prays for evil in the manner he ought to pray for good. Man is ever hasty. (12)

(12) This is in answer to the foolish demands of the disbelievers of Makkah who repeatedly demanded from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to bring about that torment with which he threatened them. It is closely connected with the preceding verse, as if to say: O foolish people instead of asking goodness you demand the torment. Can’t you realize the sufferings of the community which was visited by God’s torment?

It also contains a subtle warning to those Muslims who prayed for punishment for those disbelievers who persecuted them and rejected the message obdurately; there were still among those disbelievers many such people who afterwards embraced Islam and became its standard bearers in the world. That is why Allah says: Man does so because he is very hasty and impatient. He prays to Allah for all such things as are the immediate need of the time, though often subsequent experience shows that if Allah had granted his prayer, it would have been very harmful to him.

وَجَعَلْنَا الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ اٰيَتَيْنِ فَمَحَوْنَآ اٰيَةَ الَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَآ اٰيَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِّتَبْتَغُوْا فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَلِتَعْلَمُوْا عَدَدَ السِّنِيْنَ وَالْحِسَابَ ؕ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَصَّلْنٰهُ تَفْصِيْلًا ﴿۱۲﴾

(17-12) We have made night and day as two signs. We made the sign of the night devoid of light, and made the sign of the day radiant that you may seek the bounty of your Lord and know the computation of years and numbers. Thus We have expounded everything in detail to keep everything distinct from the other. (13)

(13) Allah invites man to study the wisdom that underlies variety in the world and not get confused and long for monotonous uniformity. In fact, the whole system is based on variety, distinctiveness and diversity in things. For the sake of illustration let us take the case of the signs of day and night: You see these opposite things daily in your life. If you just consider the underlying wisdom, you will find that without this variety there would have been hardly any activity in the world. Likewise great wisdom lies in the creation of the people with different temperaments, thoughts and inclinations. If Allah had made all men righteous by birth or annihilated disbelievers and wicked people and left only believers and submissive people in the world, the purpose of men's creation could not leave been realized. Therefore, it is wrong to desire that there should only be day and no night. The righteous thing is that these people, who have the light of guidance, should exert their utmost to remove the darkness of deviation. It is their duty that if they find darkness like that of night, they should pursue it like the sun so that the light of guidance should reappear.

وَكُلَّ اِنْسَانٍ اَلْزَمْنٰهُ طٰٓئِرَهٗ فِيْ عُنُقِهٖ ؕ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ كِتٰبًا يَّلْقٰىهُ مَنْشُوْرًا ﴿۱۳﴾

(17-13) We have fastened every man's omen to his neck. (14) On the Day of Resurrection We shall produce for him his scroll in the shape of a wide open book, (saying):

(14) “We have fastened his fate to his neck”: therefore one does not need to take omens from a bird. This is to remove the superstition of the disbelievers who used to take omens from birds etc. as if to say: The causes and consequences of good fortune or bad fate exist in man’s own person. He merits good fortune because of his own good conduct and good judgment, and likewise, suffers the consequences of evil fate by the lack of these. This was necessitated because foolish people always try to attribute their misfortunes to external causes, when in fact our fate depends on our own deeds, good or bad. If they probe into the causes, they will find that their fate was decided by their own good or bad qualities and judgments.

اِقْرَاْ كِتٰبَكَ ؕ كَفٰى بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيْبًا ؕ ﴿۱۴﴾

(17-14) "Read your scroll; this Day you suffice to take account of yourself."

مَنِ اهْتَدٰى فَاِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِيْ لِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَاِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ؕ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى ؕ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِيْنَ حَتّٰى نَبْعَثَ رَسُوْلًا ﴿۱۵﴾

(17-15) He who follows the Right Way shall do so to his own advantage; and he who strays shall incur his own loss. (15) No one shall bear another's burden. (16) And never do We punish any people until We send a Messenger (17) (to make the Truth distinct from falsehood).

(15) This is to impress that if a person adopts the right way, he does not do any favor to God or His Messenger or a reformer but he himself gets its benefits. On the other hand, if a person deviates from the right way, he can do no harm to God or His Messenger or a reformer, for they desire only to protect men from wrong ways and guide him on to the right way, and not for any selfish ends. Therefore, the right course for a wise man is to adopt the righteous way when it becomes distinct to him what is truth and what is falsehood. On the other hand, if he rejects truth because of his prejudices and self interest, he will be his own enemy and not a well wisher.

(16) The Quran has laid great stress on the doctrine of personal responsibility at several places, for one cannot follow the right way scrupulously without understanding fully its implication. It means that, everyone is solely responsible for his moral conduct and is accountable to God as an individual in his own person and no other person can share the burden of responsibility with him. As an instance, we take the case of a particular action or a particular way of conduct in which a generation or a community of a large number of people had collaborated. When the people will assemble before Allah on the Day of Judgment, their collective action will be analyzed so as to lay the burden of its responsibility on each and every person who had been conducive to it, and rewarded or punished in accordance with it. Neither will a person be punished for the part another had played in its performance nor shall the burden of the sin of one individual be laid on the shoulders of another. This doctrine has been emphasized over and over again so that a wise man should not act in imitation of another or justify his own conduct by similar deeds of others. If a particular person feels the sense of his own responsibility, he will act in such a way as to come out successful on the Day of Judgment, regardless of what the others do.

(17) This is another doctrine which has been impressed on the minds by the Quran in different ways. This is to emphasize the basic importance that a Messenger has in the dispensation of divine justice because this is determined in the light of the message brought by him. This will be employed as an argument in favor of or against the concerned people. Otherwise the infliction of punishment on the people would be unjust for in that case they could argue that they should not be punished as the knowledge of the righteous way had not been conveyed to them. But after the message had been conveyed to a particular people, and they had rejected it, there would be left no excuse for them.

It is an irony that instead of accepting the message some people are misled by reading verses like this and they ask such absurd questions: What will be the position of those, who might not have received the message of any Prophet? The wise

course for such persons would have been to ask themselves what their own position will be on the Day of Judgment, because they themselves had received the message. As regards to other people, Allah knows best who has received the message, and when, how and to what extent and what attitude a certain person adopted towards it. In short, Allah alone is aware of whether a particular person received the message in such a way as to fulfill the required condition for punishment.

وَ اِذَا اَرَدْنَاۤ اَنۡ نُّهۡلِكَ قَرۡيَةً اَمَرۡنَا مُتۡرَفِيۡهَا فَفَسَقُوۡا فِيۡهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيۡهَا الۡقَوۡلُ فَدَمَّرۡنٰهَا تَدۡمِيۡرًا ﴿۱۷﴾

(17-16) When We decide to destroy a town We command the affluent among them, whereupon they commit sins in it, then the decree (of chastisement) becomes due against them and thereafter We destroy that town utterly. (18)

(18) Here a definite form of divine procedure for the destruction of a people has been stated. When the affluent people of a habitation become disobedient, it is a portent that it is doomed to destruction. After their persistent and continuous transgression, the affluent people become so obdurate in their disobedience that they begin to discard the instinctive dictates of their conscience. The same thing has been stated in this Ayat: And when We intend to destroy a town, We give commands to its affluent people and they show disobedience. This is because Allah has created conscience for the guidance of man. Therefore, the dictates of conscience are really the commands of Allah. Thus it has become quite obvious that by “And when We intend to destroy a town” is not meant that Allah intends to destroy it without any reason. It is destroyed because after their disobedience that habitation incurs Our just wrath and We totally exterminate it. The habitation deserves such a punishment because its common people follow the affluent people who are the factual leaders of a community and are mainly responsible for the corruption of the community. At first the affluent people commit acts of disobedience, wickedness, mischief, cruelty and tyranny and then the common people follow them and incur the torment of Allah. Incidentally, this is a warning for every community that it should be very discreet and prudent in choosing and electing its leaders and rulers, for if the latter are mean and wicked, they will inevitably lead the community to destruction.

وَكَمْ اَ ۡ۬لَكْنَا مِنَ الْقُرُ وۡ۬نِ مِ بَعْدِنُ ۚ وَكَفٰى بِرَبِّكَ بِذُنُوۡبِ عِبَادِهٖ خَبِيرًا بَصِيۡ۬رًا ۱۷ ۬

(17-17) Many a generation has been destroyed by Our command since Noah's time. Your Lord is well aware and fully observant of the sins of His servants.

مَنۡ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَ قِ ا مَا نَشَآءُ لِمَنۡ نُّرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَ جَ نَّمَ يَصْلٰ ۡ۬ا مَذْمُ ًمَا مَّدْحُورًا ۱۸ ۬

(17-18) If anyone desires immediate benefits, [19] We hasten to grant whatever benefits We will in the present life to whomsoever We please, but thereafter We decree for him Hell wherein he shall burn, condemned and rejected. [20]

(19) The Arabic word ajilah literally means something which can be had immediately, but the Quran employs it as a term for “this world” which yields its advantages and results in this worldly life. Its antonym is Akhirat (Hereafter) which will yield its advantages and results after death in the life of the next world.

(20) The person who does not believe in the life of the Hereafter deserves Hell, because he strives only for the successes and good things of this world and his endeavors are confined to material objects. Consequently, such a person becomes a mere worshiper of this world and adopts wrong conduct, for he has no sense of personal responsibility and accountability to God and ultimately deserves the torment of Hell.

وَ مَنۡ اَرَادَ الۡاٰخِرَۃَ وَ سَعٰی لَہَا سَعۡیَہَا وَ ہُوَ مُؤۡمِنٌ فَاُولٰٓئِکَ کَانَ سَعۡیُہُمۡ مَّشۡکُوۡرًا ﴿۱۹﴾

(17-19) But he who desires the Hereafter and strives for it in the manner he should, and is a true believer, his striving will come to fruition. (21)

(21) Whose effort shall be appreciated, he will be rewarded for the efforts he had made for success in the Hereafter.

کُلًّا نُّمِدُّ ہٰۤؤُلَآءِ وَ ہٰۤؤُلَآءِ مِنۡ عَطَآءِ رَبِّکَ ؕ وَ مَا کَانَ عَطَآءُ رَبِّکَ مَحۡظُوۡرًا ﴿۲۰﴾

(17-20) To all of these as well as those We shall provide the wherewithal of this life in the present world by dint of your Lord's Bounty; and from none shall the Bounty of your Lord be withheld. (22)

(22) Allah gives the provisions of this world both to those who strive for this world and to those who strive for the Hereafter, but it is the gift of Allah alone and not of anyone else. It does not lie in the power of the worshipers of the world to deprive the seekers after the Hereafter of these provisions, nor have the seekers after the Hereafter any power to withhold these provisions from the worshipers of the world.

اُنۡظُرۡ کَیۡفَ فَضَّلۡنَا بَعۡضَہُمۡ عَلٰی بَعۡضٍ ؕ وَ لَلۡاٰخِرَۃُ اَکۡبَرُ دَرَجٰتٍ وَّ اَکۡبَرُ تَفۡضِیۡلًا ﴿۲۱﴾

(17-21) See, how We have exalted some above others in this world, and in the Life to Come they will have higher ranks and greater degrees of excellence over others. (23)

(23) This is to show that the seekers of the Hereafter have been exalted over the worshipers of the world even in this worldly life. However, this exaltation is not in regards to the good things of this world, rich food and dresses, palatial dwellings, luxurious means of travelling and other grand things. They enjoy that true honor, love and goodwill which is denied to the tyrants and the

rich people in spite of the fact that they may be indigent. This is because whatever the seekers of the Hereafter get in this world, it is earned in righteous and honest ways, while the worshipers of the world amass wealth by employing dishonest and cruel ways. Then the former spend what they get with prudence and righteousness. They fulfill the obligations they owe to others. They spend their money in the way of Allah and to please Allah on the needy and the indigent. In contrast to them, the worshipers of this world spend their money in the enjoyment of luxuries, wicked works, corruption and spreading other evil things. This makes the former models of God worship and purity in every respect and distinguishes them so clearly from the worshipers of the world that they shine in exaltation over the latter. These things clearly indicate that in the next world the rewards of the seekers of the Hereafter will be far greater and their superiority far higher than those of the worshipers of the world.

لَا تَجۡعَلۡ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتَقۡعُدَ مَذۡمُوۡمًا مَّخۡذُوۡلًا ﴿۲۲﴾

(17-22) Do not set up any other god with Allah [24] lest you are rendered humiliated and helpless.

(24) Or it can be rendered like this: Do not invent another deity besides Allah, or do not set up another as a deity beside Allah.

وَقَضٰى رَبُّكَ اَلَّا تَعۡبُدُوۡۤا اِلَّاۤ اِيَّاهُ وَبِالۡوَالِدَيۡنِ اِحۡسَانًا ؕ اِمَّا يَبۡلُغَنَّ عِنۡدَكَ الۡكِبَرَ اَحَدُهُمَاۤ اَوۡ كِلٰهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلۡ لَّهُمَاۤ اُفٍّ وَّلَا تَنۡهَرۡهُمَا وَقُلۡ لَّهُمَا قَوۡلًا كَرِيۡمًا ﴿۲۳﴾

(17-23) Your Lord has decreed: [25] (i) Do not worship any but Him; [26] (ii) Be good to your parents; and should both or any one of them attain old age with you, do not say to them even "fie" neither chide them, but speak to them with respect,

(25) In the succeeding verses, those main basic principles have been put forward on which Islam desires to build the entire structure of human life. These form the manifesto of the invitation

of the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared by him at the end of the Makki stage of his mission, and the eve of the new stage at Al-Madinah so that it should be known to all that the new Islamic society and state were going to be built on such and such ideological, moral, cultural economic and legal principles. (Please also refer to (Ayats 151-153 and E.Ns thereof of Surah Al-Anaam).

(26) This commandment is very comprehensive. It prohibits not only the worship of anyone except Allah but also implies that one should obey and serve and submit to Allah alone without question. One should accept His commandments and law alone to be worthy of obedience and His authority to be supreme above all. This was not merely an instruction confined to a religious creed and individual practice but it served as the foundation of the moral, cultural, and political system which was practically established in Al-Madinah by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Its first and foremost principle was that Allah alone is the Master, Sovereign and Law-giver.

وَ اخۡفِضۡ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحۡمَةِ وَقُلۡ رَّبِّ ارۡحَمۡهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيٰنِيۡ صَغِيۡرًا ؕ ۲۴

(17-24) and be humble and tender to them and say: "Lord, show mercy to them as they nurtured me when I was small."

رَبُّكُمۡ اَعۡلَمُ بِمَا فِىۡ نُفُوۡسِكُمۡ ؕ اِنۡ تَكُوۡنُوۡا صٰلِحِيۡنَ فَاِنَّهٗ كَانَ لِلۡاَوَّابِيۡنَ غَفُوۡرًا ۲۵

(17-25) Your Lord is best aware of what is in your hearts. If you are righteous, He will indeed forgive those who relent and revert [27] (to serving Allah).

(27) This verse enjoins that after Allah's right, the greatest of all the human rights is the right of parents. Therefore, the children should obey and serve and respect their parents. The collective morality of society should make it incumbent on children to be grateful and respectful to their parents, they should serve them as they nursed and brought them up in their childhood. Above all, this verse is not merely a moral recommendation but is the basis of the rights and powers of parents the details of which we find in the Books of Hadith and Fiqh. Moreover, respectful behavior and obedience to and observance of the rights of parents comprise the most important element of the material education and moral training in the Islamic society and civilization. Incidentally, all these things have determined forever the principle that the Islamic state shall make the family life sound and secure by laws, administrative regulations and educational policy and prevent its disintegration.

وَ اٰتِ ذَا الۡقُرۡبٰى حَقَّهٗ وَ الۡمِسۡكِيۡنَ وَ ابۡنَ السَّبِيۡلِ وَ لَا تُبَذِّرۡ تَبۡذِيۡرًا ۲۶

(17-26) (iii) Give to the near of kin his due, and also to the needy and the wayfarer. (iv) Do not squander your wealth wastefully,

اِنَّ الۡمُبَذِّرِيۡنَ كَانُوۡۤا اِخۡوَانَ الشَّيٰطِيۡنِ ؕ وَ كَانَ الشَّيۡطٰنُ لِرَبِّهٖ كَفُوۡرًا ۲۷

(17-27) for those who squander wastefully are Satan's brothers, and Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord.

وَ اِمَّا تُعۡرِضَنَّ عَنۡہُمُ ابۡتِغَآءَ رَحۡمَۃٍ مِّنۡ رَّبِّکَ تَرۡجُوۡہَا فَقُلۡ لَّہُمۡ قَوۡلًا مَّیۡسُوۡرًا ﴿۲۸﴾

(17-28) (v) And when you must turn away from them - (that is, from the destitute, the near of kin, the needy, and the wayfarer) - in pursuit of God's Mercy which you expect to receive, then speak to them kindly. (28)

(28) These three articles are meant to impress that a man should not reserve his earnings and his wealth exclusively for his own person. He should do his utmost to fulfill his own necessities of life in a moderate way and render the rights of his relatives, neighbors and other needy persons as well. This attitude will help create the spirit of cooperation, sympathy and justice in the collective Islamic life. Thus every relative will cooperate with the other and every rich person will help the needy in his neighborhood and a wayfarer would find himself an honorable guest among generous hosts. The conception of rights should be so extensive that every person should consider that all other human beings have rights on his person and his property so that he should serve them with the idea that he is rendering their rights and is not doing any favor to them. In that case one would beg pardon of the other if he was unable to serve him and would pray to God to send his blessings upon him to enable him to serve His servants.

These articles of the Islamic manifesto were not merely confined to moral teachings but these formed the basis of the commandments of Zakat and voluntary charity. The laws of inheritance and of making will and endowments were based on these articles. The rights of the orphans were determined by these and it was made obligatory on every habitation to entertain a wayfarer gratis for at least three days. Subsequently the whole moral system was formed so as to create the feelings of generosity, sympathy and cooperation. So much so that the

people began to realize the importance of and observe voluntarily the moral rights which could neither be demanded legally nor enforced by law.

وَ لَا تَجۡعَلۡ يَدَكَ مَغۡلُوۡلَةً اِلٰى عُنُقِكَ وَ لَا تَبۡسُطۡهَا كُلَّ الۡبَسۡطِ فَتَقۡعُدَ مَلُوۡمًا مَّحۡسُوۡرًا ﴿۲۹﴾

(17-29) (vi) Do not keep your hand fastened to your neck nor outspread it, altogether outspread, for you will be left sitting rebuked, destitute. (29)

(29) "And do not keep your hand fastened to your neck", means: Do not be parsimonious. "Nor outspread it altogether widespread" means: Do not be extravagant. The Quran desires the people to follow the golden mean, i.e. they should neither be so parsimonious as to prevent the circulation of wealth nor so extravagant as to destroy their own economy. On the contrary, they should learn to behave in a balanced manner so that they should spend money wherever it should be spent and refrain from becoming spendthrifts so as to involve themselves into trouble. As a matter of fact, it is ingratitude towards Allah's favor to spend money for the sake of show, luxury and sinful acts and similar things which are neither man's real necessities nor useful. Therefore, those people who spend money lavishly on such things as these are the brethren of Satan.

These clauses too, are not merely meant to be moral instructions for individuals. They are intended to safeguard the Islamic society against extravagance by moral instruction, collective pressure and legal restrictions. Accordingly, in the Islamic state of Al-Madinah, practical steps were taken to safeguard the community against extravagance. First, many forms of extravagance and luxury were forbidden by law. Secondly, legal measures were taken against it. Thirdly, social reforms were introduced to put an end to those customs which involved extravagance. The government was empowered to prevent people from the obvious forms of extravagance. Above all, Zakat and voluntary charity helped to break parsimony and the lust of hoarding money. Besides these measures, a public

opinion was created that enabled the people to discriminate between generosity and extravagance and thrift and parsimony: so much so that parsimonious people were looked down upon as ignominious and the thrifty people were regarded as honorable. This moral and mental attitude became a part and parcel of the Muslim society, and even today the parsimonious people and hoarders are looked down upon in the Muslim society, while the generous people are respected everywhere.

اِنَّ رَبَّکَ یَبۡسُطُ الرِّزۡقَ لِمَنۡ یَّشَآءُ وَ یَقۡدِرُ ؕ اِنَّہٗ کَانَ بِعِبَادِہٖ خَبِیۡرًۢا بَصِیۡرًا ﴿۳۰﴾

(17-30) Certainly Your Lord makes plentiful the provision of whomsoever He wills and straitens it for whomsoever He wills. He is well-aware and is fully observant of all that relates to His servants. (30)

(30) That is, man cannot realize the wisdom of the disparity of wealth among the people. Therefore, man should not try to interfere by artificial means with the natural distribution of wealth. It is wrong to level down natural inequality or to aggravate it by artificial means so as to make it unjust. Both the extremes are wrong. The best economic system is that which is established on the divine Way of the division of wealth.

As a result of the realization of the wisdom of economic disparity, no such problems arose which might have made that disparity an evil in itself so as to demand the creation of a classless society. On the contrary, in the righteous society established at Al-Madinah on these divine principles which are akin to human nature, the economic differences were not artificially disturbed. But by means of moral and legal reforms these became the means of many moral, spiritual and cultural blessings and benefits instead of becoming the means of injustice. Thus, the wisdom of the disparity created by the Creator of the Universe was practically demonstrated at Al-Madinah.

وَ لَا تَقۡتُلُوۡۤا اَوۡلَادَکُمۡ خَشۡیَۃَ اِمۡلَاقٍ ؕ نَحۡنُ نَرۡزُقُہُمۡ وَ اِیَّاکُمۡ ؕ اِنَّ قَتۡلَہُمۡ کَانَ خِطۡاً کَبِیۡرًا ﴿۳۱﴾

(17-31) (vii) Do not kill your children for fear of want. We will provide for them and for you. Surely killing them is a great sin. (31)

(31) This verse cuts at the very root of the movement of birth control, which has been going on from ancient times to our present age. It was the fear of want that induced people to kill their children or resort to abortion. In our age another plan has been added to these, i.e. contraception. This article of the Islamic manifesto prohibits the people from reducing the number of mouths by artificial means but exhorts them to increase the means of production according to the natural methods enjoined by Allah. According to this article, it is one of the biggest mistakes of man to check birth rate as a solution to the want and scarcity of provisions. Therefore, it warns him, as if to say: O man, it is not you who make arrangement for food, but Allah, Who settled you in the land and has been providing for you and will provide for those who will come after you. History tells us that the food resources have always expanded in proportion to the number of inhabitants of a country. Nay, often they have exceeded far more than the needs of the inhabitants. Thus it is a folly on the part of man to interfere with the arrangements of Allah.

It is very significant that as a result of this teaching, no movement has ever been started to control birth nor has there been any inclination to infanticide among the Muslims ever since the revelation of the Quran.

وَ لَا تَقۡرَبُوا الزِّنٰۤی اِنَّہٗ کَانَ فَاحِشَۃً ؕ وَ سَآءَ سَبِیۡلًا ﴿۳۲﴾

(17-32) (viii) Do not even approach fornication for it is an outrageous act, and an evil way. (32)

(32) “And do not come near to adultery”. This commandment is meant both for individuals and society as a whole. It warns each individual not only to guard against adultery or fornication itself but against all those things that lead to or stimulate it. As regards to society as a whole the commandment enjoins it to make such

arrangements as prevent adultery and eradicate the means and stimulants that lead to adultery. Therefore, the society should employ all those legal and educative means that help develop such an environment as prevents and eradicates indecency.

Finally, this article formed the basis of laws and regulations of the Islamic system of life. In order to fulfill its implications adultery and false accusation of adultery were made criminal offenses. Regulations about hijab were promulgated. The publication of indecent materials was banned and drinking of intoxicants was made unlawful. Restrictions on music, dancing and pictures which are conducive to adultery were imposed. Such laws were enacted and marriage was made easy to and cut at the root of adultery.

وَ لَا تَ قۡتُلُوا النَّ فۡسَ الَّتِیۡ حَرَّمَ اللّٰہُ اِلَّا بِا لۡحَقِّ ؕ وَ مَنۡ قُتِلَ مَظۡلُوۡمًا فَقَدۡ
جَعَلۡنَا لِوَلِیِّہٖ سُلۡطٰنًا فَلَا یُسۡرِفۡ فِّی الۡقَتۡلِ ؕ اِنَّہٗ کَانَ مَنۡصُوۡرًا ﴿۳۳﴾

(17-33) (ix) Do not kill any person whom Allah has forbidden to kill, (33) except with right. (34) We have granted the heir of him who has been wrongfully killed the authority to (35) (claim retribution);so let him not exceed in slaying. (36) He shall be helped. (37)

(33) “And do not kill a person” includes not only the prohibition of the killing of other souls but also his own soul as well for it is also included in the prohibition that immediately follows this command. Thus suicide is regarded as heinous a sin as murder. Some foolish people object to the prohibition of suicide saying that they themselves are the masters of their souls. Therefore, there is nothing wrong in killing one’s own self or in destroying one’s own property. They forget that every soul belongs to Allah, and none has any right to destroy it, nay, even to abuse it. For this world is a place of trial, where we should undergo the test up to the end of our lives in accordance with the will of Allah. It does not matter whether our circumstances are favorable or adverse for trial. Therefore, it would be wrong to run away from the place of test, not to speak of committing such a

heinous crime as suicide (which Allah has prohibited) to escape it. For it means that the one who commits suicide tries to run away from small troubles and ignominies towards greater affliction and eternal torment and ignominy.

(34) When the Islamic state was established, “killing by right” was confined to five cases only, namely to punish, (1) A willful murderer for retribution. (2) Opponents of the true religion during war. (3) Those who attempt to overthrow the Islamic system of government. (4) A man or woman guilty of adultery. (5) An apostate.

(35) We have translated the Arabic word sultan as “the authority of retribution”. Here it stands for “a ground for legal action”. This also lays down the legal principle that in a case of murder, the real plaintiff is not the government but the guardian or the guardians of the murdered person who are authorized to pardon the murderer or receive blood money instead of taking his life.

(36) Exceed limits in killing would be to kill more persons than the murderer or to kill the criminal by degrees with torment or to disfigure his dead body or to kill him after receiving blood money, etc. All these things have been forbidden.

(37) It has not been defined how succor will be given because at the time of its revelation the Islamic state had not yet been established. After its establishment it was made clear that a guardian was not authorized to enforce retribution by murdering the criminal. The Islamic government alone is legally authorized to take retribution; therefore, succor for justice should be demanded only from it.

وَ لَا تَ قۡرَبُوامَالَ ا لۡيَتِ يمِ اِلَّا بِالَّتِ ىۡ اَ حۡسَنُ حَتّٰى يَ بۡلُغَ اَشُدَّهٗ وَ اَ وۡفُوا
بِالۡعَهۡدِ ۚ اِنَّ لۡعَ هۡدَ كَانَ مَسۡـُٔوۡلًا ﴿۳۴﴾

(17-34) (x) And do not even go near the property of the orphan - except that it be in the best manner - till he attains his

maturity. [38] (xi) And fulfil the covenant, for you will be called to account regarding the covenant. [39]

(38) This too, was not merely a moral instruction. When the Islamic state was established, legal and administrative methods were adopted to safeguard the rights of orphans, the details of which are found in the literature of Hadith and Fiqh. Then this principle was extended to cover the cases of all those citizens who were unable to safeguard their own rights. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself declared: I am the guardian of the one who has no guardian. And this is the basis of many rules and regulations of the Islamic law.

(39) Fulfillment of pledges was not meant to be merely a moral instruction for individuals but afterwards when the Islamic state was established, this became the guiding principle for the conduct of all internal; and external affairs by the Muslim community and the Islamic government.

وَاَوۡفُوا الۡكَيۡلَ اِذَا كِلۡتُمۡ وَزِنُوۡا بِالۡقِسۡطَاسِ الۡمُسۡتَقِيۡمِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ خَيۡرٌ وَّاَحۡسَنُ تَاۡوِيۡلًا ﴿۳۵﴾

(17-35) (xii) Give full measure when you measure, and weigh with even scales. [40] That is fair and better in consequence. [41]

(40) This instruction was not confined to individuals only but it has been made a part of the duties of an Islamic government to supervise transactions in the markets and streets to see that exact measures and weights are being observed, and prevent their breach and violation by the force of law. Afterwards it was made one of the duties of the government to eradicate dishonesty in all commercial dealings and economic transactions.

(41) That is, its end will be best in this world and it will be best in the Hereafter. It is best in this world because it produces mutual trust between sellers and buyers. As a result of this, commerce prospers and there is a general prosperity. As regards the Hereafter, there the end depends entirely on honesty, piety and fear of God.

وَ لَا تَ قۡفُ مَا لَيۡسَ لَكَ بِهٖ عِلۡمٌ ؕ اِنَّ السَّمۡعَ وَ الۡبَصَرَ وَ الۡفُؤَادَ كُلُّ اُولٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنۡهُ مَسۡـُٔوۡلًا ۳۶

(17-36) (xiii) Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Surely the hearing, the sight, the heart - each of these shall be called to account. (42)

(42) The meanings of “Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge” are very comprehensive. It demands that both in individual and collective life, one should not follow mere guess work and presumption instead of knowledge. This instruction covers all aspects of Islamic life, moral, legal, political, administrative and applies to science, arts and education. It has thus saved the society from numerous evils which are produced in human life by following guesswork instead of knowledge. The Islamic moral code demands: Guard against suspicion and do not accuse any individual or group without proper investigation. In law, it has been made a permanent principle that no action should be taken against anyone without proper investigation. It has been made unlawful to arrest, beat or imprison anyone on mere suspicion during investigation. In regards to foreign relations, the definite policy has been laid down that no action should be taken without investigation, nor should rumors be set afloat. Likewise in education the so called sciences based on mere guess work, presumptions and irrational theories have been disapproved. Above all, it cuts at the very root of superstitions, for this instruction teaches the believers to accept only that which is based on the knowledge imparted by Allah and His Messenger.

وَ لَا تَمۡشِ فِى الۡاَرۡضِ مَرَحًا ۚ اِنَّكَ لَنۡ تَخۡرِقَ الۡاَرۡضَ وَ لَنۡ تَبۡلُغَ الۡجِبَالَ طُوۡلًا ۳۷

(17-37) (xiv) Do not strut about in the land arrogantly. Surely you cannot cleave the earth, nor reach the heights of the mountains in stature. (43)

(43) This instruction warns against the ways of tyrants and vain people and is not merely meant for the individual but also for

the collective conduct of the Muslim community. It was because of this guidance that the rulers, governors and commanders of the Islamic state which was established on the basis of this manifesto, were free from every tinge of tyranny, arrogance, haughtiness, pride and vanity, so much so that even in the battlefield they never uttered a word which had the slightest indication of any of these vain things. Their gait, dress, dwelling and conveyance showed humility. In short, their ways of conduct were not those of big ones but those of humble persons. That is why they never tried to overawe the people of a conquered city by show of pomp and pride.

كُلُّ ذٰلِكَ كَانَ سَيِّئُهٗ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ مَكْرُوْهًا ﴿٣٨﴾

(17-38) The wickedness of each of that is hateful to your Lord. (44)

(44) That is, Allah disapproves of the commission of anything that has been prohibited or, in other words, He disapproves of disobedience to any of these commandments.

ذٰلِكَ مِمَّآ اَوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ ؕ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتُلْقٰى فِىْ جَهَنَّمَ مَلُوْمًا مَّدْحُوْرًا ﴿٣٩﴾

(17-39) That is part of the wisdom your Lord has revealed to you. So do not set up any deity beside Allah lest you are cast into Hell, rebuked and deprived of every good. (45)

(45) Though this has been addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), the real addressee is every human being as in the case of many such verses.

اَفَاَصْفٰىكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِالْبَنِيْنَ وَاتَّخَذَ مِنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنَاثًا ؕ اِنَّكُمْ لَتَقُوْلُوْنَ قَوْلًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿٤٠﴾

(17-40) What, has your Lord favoured you with sons and has taken for Himself daughters from among the angels? (46) You are indeed uttering a monstrous lie.

(46) Please refer to(Ayats 57-59 and their E.Ns).

وَ لَقَ صَقَ نَافِۡ ذَا ا ۡ قُ اٰنِ لِيَذَّكَّرُوۡا ؕ وَ مَا يَزِ دُ اِلَّا نُفُوۡرًا ﴿۴۱﴾

(17-41) We have expounded (the Truth) in diverse ways in this Qur'an that they might take it to heart but all this only aggravates their aversion.

لِ قُ لَّ كَانَ مَعَهٗۤ اٰلِـَ كَمَا يَقُوۡلُ نَ اِذًا لَّا بۡتَغَ ا اِلٰى ذِى ط عۡ شِ سَبِيۡلًا ﴿۴۲﴾

(17-42) Say, (O Muhammad): "Had there been other gods with Him, as they claim, they would surely have attempted to find a way to the Lord of the Throne. (47)

(47) That is, they would have themselves tried their best to become masters of the Throne. This is because if there had been more than one partners in Godhead, it would produce one of the two results: (1) If they were all independent gods, it was not conceivable that they would agree and cooperate with one another in the management of the boundless universe and there could never have been unanimity, uniformity and balanced proportion in its functioning. There would have been conflict at every step and everyone would have tried to dominate others in order to become its sole master. or (2) if one of them had been the supreme god and the others his obedient servants whom he had delegated some of his powers, then, according to the maxim “power corrupts”, they would never have been content with remaining obedient servants of the supreme god and would have conspired to become the supreme god themselves.

Whereas the fact is that in this universe not even a grain of wheat or a blade of grass can grow unless and until everything in the earth and the heavens cooperate with one another for its production. Therefore, only an utterly ignorant and block headed person can conceive that there are more than one independent or semi independent rulers, who carry on the management of this universe. Anyone who has tried to understand the nature and functioning of the universe will most surely arrive at the conclusion that there is One and only One Sovereign ruling over

this universe, and there is absolutely no likelihood of anyone else to be a partner in this at any stage.

سُبۡحٰنَہٗ وَ تَعٰلٰی عَمَّا یَقُوۡلُوۡنَ عُلُوًّا کَبِیۡرًا ﴿۴۳﴾

(17-43) Holy is He and far above all that they say.

تُسَبِّحُ لَہُ السَّمٰوٰتُ السَّبۡعُ وَ الۡاَرۡضُ وَ مَنۡ فِیۡہِنَّ ؕ وَ اِنۡ مِّنۡ شَیۡءٍ اِلَّا یُسَبِّحُ بِحَمۡدِہٖ وَ لٰکِنۡ لَّا تَفۡقَہُوۡنَ تَسۡبِیۡحَہُمۡ ؕ اِنَّہٗ کَانَ حَلِیۡمًا غَفُوۡرًا ﴿۴۴﴾

(17-44) The seven heavens, the earth, and all that is within them [48] give glory to Him. There is nothing but gives glory to Him with His praise, [49] though you do not understand their hymns of praise. He is Most Forbearing, Exceedingly Forgiving." [50]

(48) That is, the entire universe and everything in it bear witness to the fact that their Creator and Guardian is free from each and every fault, defect and weakness, and that He is far above this that there should be any partner or associate in His Godhead.

(49) Everything is not only singing hymns of the glory of its Creator but is affording the proof that He is perfect in every respect and worthy of all praise. Everything is an embodiment of the proof that its Creator and Administrator is the one in whom there is perfection of every quality. Therefore, He alone is worthy of praise.

(50) That is, it is due to His forbearance and forgiveness that though you are persistently insolent to Him and go on inventing one false thing or the other against Him, He forbears and forgives you. He neither withholds provisions from you nor deprives you of His favors nor strikes an insolent person instantly dead with a thunderbolt. Above all, He is so forbearing and forgiving that He gives long enough respite to the individuals and communities to mend their ways, sends His prophets and reformers for their admonition and guidance and forgives all the past mistakes and errors, if one sincerely repents and adopts the right way.

وَ اِذَا قَرَاۡتَ الۡ قُرۡاٰنَ جَعَلۡنَا بَیۡنَکَ وَ بَیۡنَ الَّذِیۡنَ لَا یُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِالۡاٰخِرَۃِ حِجَابًا
مَّسۡتُوۡرًا ﴿۴۵﴾

(17-45) When you recite the Qur'an, We place a hidden barrier between you and those who do not believe in the Hereafter;

وَّ جَعَلۡنَا عَلٰی قُلُوۡبِہِمۡ اَکِنَّۃً اَنۡ یَّفۡقَہُوۡہُ وَ فِیۡۤ اٰذَانِہِمۡ وَقۡرًا ؕ وَ اِذَا ذَکَرۡتَ رَبَّکَ
فِی الۡ قُرۡاٰنِ وَحۡدَہٗ وَلَّوۡا عَلٰۤی اَدۡبَارِہِمۡ نُفُوۡرًا ﴿۴۶﴾

(17-46) and We place a covering on their hearts so that they do not comprehend it, and We cause a heaviness in their ears; (51) and when you mention your Lord, the Only True Lord, in the Qur'an, they turn their backs in aversion. (52)

(51) This refers to the divine law according to which those people, who do not believe in the Hereafter, cannot benefit from the Quran. Allah has attributed this law to Himself, as if to say: The natural result of disbelief in the Hereafter is that the heart of such a man becomes dull and his ears become deaf to the message of the Quran, for Quran bases its invitation on the belief in the Hereafter. So it warns the people that they should not be deluded by this apparent aspect of the worldly life if there appears to be none to call them to account here; for it does not mean they are not at all accountable and answerable to anyone. Likewise if Allah allows freedom of belief to practice shirk, atheism, disbelief or Tauhid with impunity in this world, and their practice does not appear to make any practical difference in this world, it does not mean that these things do not produce any results at all. For, in fact, everyone shall be accountable and answerable after death in the next world. Then everyone will realize that the doctrine of Tauhid alone is true and all other doctrines are false. For, if at present the consequences of deeds do not appear after death, they shall inevitably appear, but the reality has now been hidden behind an invisible curtain. There is an inevitable moral law according to which submission to it will bear its fruit and disobedience shall incur its losses. As decisions according to this moral law will be made in the Hereafter. You should not be enticed by the charms of this transitory life. You

should, therefore, keep in view that ultimately you shall have to render an account of all your deeds in this world before your Lord, and adopt that true creed and moral attitude which may be conducive to your success in the Hereafter.

From this it must have become obvious that if a man does not believe in the Hereafter, he will never consider the message of the Quran worth his while but will hanker after this world and its joys which he can feel and experience. Naturally his ears will not listen to the message and it will never reach the depths of his heart. Allah has stated this psychological fact in this verse.

In this connection, it should be remembered that the words contained in this verse were uttered by the disbelievers of Makkah as quoted in (Ayat 5 of Surah HamimSajdah): “They say, O Muhammad, a covering has fallen over our hearts, and our ears are deaf for the message you give and there is a curtain between you and us. You may go on with your work and we will do whatever we desire.” Here the same words have been cited, as if to say: You consider this state of yours to be a virtue, whereas this is a curse which has fallen on you according to the divine law because of your disbelief of the Hereafter.

(52) That is, they do not like it at all that you should consider Allah alone as your Lord and not mention the Lords they have set up. They seem to think it strange that one should go on praising Allah and never mention the miracles of their elders and saints nor praise them for their favors. For, according to them, Allah has delegated the powers of His Godhead to their great ones. Therefore, they say: What a strange fellow he is! He believes that the knowledge of the unknown, and all the power and authority belong to One Allah alone. Why does he not pay tribute to those who give us children, cure us of diseases, and help make our commerce flourish, in short, fulfill all our wishes and desires.

نَ ﴿ۡ ﴾ ۡ ﴿ ﴾ ۡ ﴿ ﴾ ۡ ﴿

(17-47) We are well aware of what they wish to hear when they listen to you and what they say when they confer in whispers, when the wrong-doers say: "You are only following one who is bewitched." (53)

(53) This refers to those devices which they conspired against the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They would secretly listen to him, and then hold consultations in order to counteract this. Sometimes it so happened that they suspected that someone had been influenced by the Quran. Then they would sit together and try to dissuade him, saying: How is it that you have been influenced by a person who himself is bewitched by some enemy and talks like this?

اُ نۡظُ كَ ۡفَ ضَرَبُ ۡوا لَكَ ۡ اَلۡاَمۡثَالَ فَضَلُّ ۡوا فَلَا يَ ۡتَطِ ۡيعُ ۡوۡنَ سَبِ ۡيلًا ۴۸

(17-48) Just see how strange are the things they invent about you. They have altogether strayed, and are unable to find the right way. (54)

(54) This is to say that they expressed different opinions at different times which contradicted each other. Sometimes they said: You are a sorcerer. And at other times: You have been bewitched by someone, or you are a poet or you are possessed of some evil spirit. These contradictory things were a proof that they did not know the reality. Otherwise, they would not have invented a different name to suit each occasion. This also shows that they themselves were not sure of the charge they leveled against him. If they called him by one epithet one day, they themselves felt afterwards that it did not fit in. Then they would invent the second epithet and then the third and so on. Thus every new epithet contradicted the previous ones and showed that there was no truth in them, but in their enmity they were inventing one falsehood after the other.

وَ قَالُ ۡوۡۤاءَ اِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَّ رُفَاتًاءَ اِنَّا لَمَبۡعُ ۡوۡثُ ۡوۡنَ خَلۡقًا جَدِيۡدًا ۴۹

(17-49) They say: "When we are turned to bones and particles (of dust), shall we truly be raised up as a new creation?"

قُلۡ كُوۡنُوۡا حِجَارَةً اَوۡ حَدِيۡدًا ۙ﴿۵۰﴾

(17-50) Tell them: "(You will be raised afresh even if) you turn to stone or iron,

اَوۡ خَلۡقًا مِّمَّا يَكۡبُرُ فِىۡ صُدُوۡرِكُمۡ ۚ فَسَيَقُوۡلُوۡنَ مَنۡ يُّعِيۡدُنَا ؕ قُلِ الَّذِىۡ فَطَرَكُمۡ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ؕ فَسَيُنۡغِضُوۡنَ اِلَيۡكَ رُءُوۡسَهُمۡ وَيَقُوۡلُوۡنَ مَتٰى هُوَ ؕ قُلۡ عَسٰۤى اَنۡ يَّكُوۡنَ قَرِيۡبًا ۙ﴿۵۱﴾

(17-51) or any other form of creation you deem hardest of all (to recreate from)." They will certainly ask: "Who will bring us back (to life)?" Say: "He Who created you in the first instance." They will shake their heads at you and inquire: "When will that be?" (55) Say: "Perhaps that time might have drawn near;

(55) “They will shake their heads at you” in astonishment or to express doubt or disapproval or to scoff at you.

يَوۡمَ يَدۡعُوۡكُمۡ فَتَسۡتَجِيۡبُوۡنَ بِحَمۡدِهٖ وَتَظُنُّوۡنَ اِنۡ لَّبِثۡتُمۡ اِلَّا قَلِيۡلًا ﴿۵۲﴾

(17-52) on the Day when He will call you and you will rise praising Him in response to His call, and you will believe that you had lain in this state only for a while." (56)

(56) That is, you will feel as if the intervening period between death and coming again to life on the Day of Resurrection was only a few hours or so, for you will think that you had just woken up after a short sleep by the sudden noise produced on the Day. As regards to you will rise up praising Him, it is a subtle hint towards a great reality. At the time of rising up from death, both the believer and the unbeliever will be uttering the praise of Allah. The believer will do so because in the worldly life also he believed in this creed and practiced it. As regards the unbeliever, he will have the urge to do so because of the inherent and ingrained tendency in him which he had been suppressing by his folly. In the new life all those deliberate suppressions will vanish away and he will involuntarily utter the praise of Allah.

وَقُلْ لِّعِبَادِيْ يَقُوْلُوا الَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ ۭ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ يَنْزَغُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۭ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ كَانَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِيْنًا ۝۵۳

(17-53) Tell My servants, [57] (O Muhammad), to say always that which is best. [58] Verily it is Satan who sows discord among people. Satan indeed is an open enemy to mankind. [59]

(57) The believers.

(58) The believers have been enjoined to say only the best things even in their discussion with the disbelievers and other opponents of their faith. They should neither use harsh words nor make exaggerated statements. They should be cool in their conversation and say only what is true and dignified in spite of the provoking behavior of the opponents.

(59) The believers have been forewarned to guard against the provocations of Satan, as if to say: While answering your opponents, if you feel that you are being aroused to anger, you should at once understand that it is Satan who is exciting you in order to do harm to your dispute, in which he wants to engage human beings for sowing discord between them.

رَبُّكُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ ۭ اِنْ يَّشَاْ يَرْحَمْكُمْ اَوْ اِنْ يَّشَاْ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ ۭ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيْلًا ۝۵۴

(17-54) Your Lord knows you best. He will have mercy on you if He wills and chastise you if He wills. [60] We have not sent you, (O Muhammad), as an overseer over them. [61]

(60) This is to warn the believers to refrain from making claims of piety so as to assign Paradise to themselves and Hell to their opponents. It is Allah alone Who has the power to decide these things because He is fully aware of the known and secret and the present and future things about all human beings. It is He Who will decide whether to show mercy to anyone or give chastisement. However, a man may say in the light of the divine Book that a certain kind of human beings deserve mercy and

another kind of people incur chastisement but none has any right to say specifically that a particular man will be given chastisement and another will get salvation.

(61) This is to declare that a Prophet is sent to convey the message and not to decide whether a person will receive mercy or get chastisement. It does not, however, mean that, God forbid, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself did such a thing and Allah had to warn him. In fact, this is to warn the Muslims that when the Prophet himself is not in a position as to decide the fates of the people, they should never think of such a thing as to assign Paradise and Hell to anyone.

وَ رَبُّکَ اَعۡلَمُ بِمَنۡ فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ ؕ وَ لَقَدۡ فَضَّلۡنَا بَعۡضَ النَّبِیّٖنَ عَلٰی بَعۡضٍ وَّ اٰتَیۡنَا دَاوٗدَ زَبُوۡرًا ﴿۵۵﴾

(17-55) Your Lord knows all who dwell in the heavens and the earth. We have exalted some Prophets over others, (62) and We gave the Psalms to David. (63)

(62) Though this has apparently been addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), in fact the real addressees are the disbelievers of Makkah. This is to rebuke them for the low opinion they held in regard to the Prophet (peace be upon him). As it commonly happens, contemporaries in general and opponents in particular do not see anything great and noble in a person of their own time. The same was the case with the contemporaries of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who could not see anything extraordinary or great in him. He appeared to be merely a common man of their habitation. On the other hand, they were full of praise in regard to the famous personalities who had lived in the past few centuries and imagined them to be the perfection of greatness. That is why, they raised frivolous objections against his claim to Prophethood, as if to say: Look at this man who considers himself to be a Prophet whereas he cannot stand in comparison with the former great Prophets who are held in high esteem by all. Allah has answered their objection, as if to say: We are fully aware of all Our creatures in the heavens and the earth, and We know their ranks but you do not know. We know whom to

favor with Prophethood, as We have been favoring the former Prophets and exalting some Prophets above others in rank.

(63) It appears that Prophet David (peace be upon him) has been particularly mentioned to show that Prophethood does not mean that one should have nothing to do with the life of this world. This was the answer to the objection they were raising against the claim to Prophethood by Muhammad (peace be upon him), that he was a man of the world. It means to say: Though David was a king who had to engage himself in worldly affairs more than a common man, he was favored by Allah with Prophethood, and given the Book, the Psalms. Likewise Muhammad (peace be upon him) could be favored with Prophethood in spite of the fact that he had wives and children and passed his life like other common people and was engaged in buying and selling in the market. In short, in performing all those duties that a man of the world has to perform to meet his necessities of life. This was necessitated because according to the disbelievers of Makkah, such a man of the world could not be considered to be even a pious man, much less a Prophet. For pious people should have nothing to do with the worldly affairs but should sit in seclusion and remember God whereas the Prophet (peace be upon him) had to work to fulfill the necessities of life.

قُلِ ا دۡعُوا الَّذِيۡنَ زَعَمۡتُمۡ مِّنۡ دُوۡنِهٖ فَلَا يَمۡلِكُوۡنَ كَشۡفَ الضُّرِّ عَنۡكُمۡ وَ لَا تَحۡوِيۡلًا ﴿۵۶﴾

(17-56) Tell them: "Call upon those whom you fancy to be (your helpers) instead of Him! They have no power to remove any affliction from you, nor can they shift it (to any other)." (64)

(64) This warning helps to elaborate the doctrine of Tauhid and negate shirk. According to this, shirk is not confined merely to falling prostrate before any other than Allah but it is also shirk to pray to or invoke the help of any other than Allah. For praying to or calling for help any other than Allah is in reality a kind of worship. Therefore, the one who invokes for help any other than Allah is as much guilty of shirk as the worshiper of an idol. This

verse also shows clearly that, none other than Allah, has any power to attend to prayers and relieve any one of trouble or alter any one's bad condition. Hence, if one believes that someone other than Allah has any power, he shall be guilty of shirk.

اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ يَبْتَغُوْنَ اِلٰى رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيْلَةَ اَيُّهُمْ اَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُوْنَ رَحْمَتَهٗ وَيَخَافُوْنَ عَذَابَهٗ ؕ اِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُوْرًا ۝۵۷

(17-57) Those whom they call upon are themselves seeking the means of access to their Lord, each trying to be nearer to Him. They crave for His Mercy and dread His chastisement. (65) Surely your Lord's punishment is to be feared.

(65) The words of the text are a clear proof that the deities and the helpers referred to in this verse were not idols of stone but were either angels or dead saints. It is clearly implied in this that no prophet, no saint and no angel, whom the people invoke for help, has the power to hear prayers and help anyone. They themselves hope for mercy from Allah and dread His punishment and vie with one another in seeking means for nearness to Him.

وَاِنْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ اِلَّا نَحْنُ مُهْلِكُوْهَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ اَوْ مُعَذِّبُوْهَا عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا ؕ كَانَ ذٰلِكَ فِى الْكِتٰبِ مَسْطُوْرًا ۝۵۸

(17-58) There is not a town but We shall destroy it or upon which We shall inflict severe chastisement (66) before the Day of Resurrection. This is written down in the Eternal Book (of Allah).

(66) This is to remove the delusion of the disbelievers that their habitations were immune from danger or chastisement. This verse warns that every habitation will be destroyed as a matter of course or by Allah's chastisement.

وَمَا مَنَعَنَاۤ اَنْ نُّرْسِلَ بِالْاٰيٰتِ اِلَّاۤ اَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْاَوَّلُوْنَ ؕ وَاٰتَيْنَا ثَمُوْدَ النَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوْا بِهَا ؕ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْاٰيٰتِ اِلَّا تَخْوِيْفًا ۝۵۹

(17-59) Nothing hindered Us from sending Our Signs (67) except that the people of olden times rejected them as lies. We publicly sent the she-camel to the Thamud to open their eyes but

they wronged her. (68) We never send Our Signs except to cause people to fear. (69)

(67) Here signs mean those visible miracles which are presented as a proof of Prophethood. The disbelievers from among the Quraish were demanding such signs over and over again.

(68) This is to warn the disbelievers, as if to say: It is the mercy of Allah that He is not showing such a sign so that you might mend your ways but in your folly you presume that such a sign cannot be presented. You should know that a sign is not being sent because its denial inevitably brings chastisement and the community is annihilated. You can learn from the past history that those communities which disbelieved in the open signs were utterly destroyed, such as the people of Thamud.

(69) That is, miracles are not shown for fun. These are meant to warn the people that the Prophet is being helped by the Almighty and that they should realize the terrible consequences of disobedience.

وَ اِذۡ قُلۡنَا لَکَ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ اَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ ؕ وَ مَا جَعَلۡنَا الرُّءۡیَا الَّتِیۡۤ اَرَیۡنٰکَ اِلَّا
فِتۡنَۃً لِّلنَّاسِ وَ الشَّجَرَۃَ الۡمَلۡعُوۡنَۃَ فِی الۡقُرۡاٰنِ ؕ وَ نُخَوِّفُہُمۡ ۙ فَمَا یَزِیۡدُہُمۡ اِلَّا
طُغۡیَانًا کَبِیۡرًا ﴿۶۰﴾

(17-60) And recall when We said to you, (O Muhammad), that your Lord encompasses these people; (70) and that We have made that vision that We have shown you, (71) and the tree accursed in the Qur'an, (72) but as a trial for people. We go about warning them, but each warning leads them to greater transgression.

(70) That is, at the very beginning of your Prophethood, when the disbelievers of the Quraish had started opposition to your message, We declared that We are encircling them. They might try their best to obstruct your message, but they will inevitably fail in this and your mission will succeed regardless of opposition.

Can’t they see that this declaration has come out true as a miracle, for their opposition has failed to hinder your message, and they have not been able to do any harm to you at all. This was a clear sign of the fact that the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was being supported by the Almighty God. As regards to the declaration that Allah is encircling the disbelievers and helping the mission of the Prophet, it occurs in several Surahs of the first stage of Prophethood at Makkah. For instance, in (Ayats 17-20 of Surah Al-Burooj), Allah says: These disbelievers do not learn a lesson from the stories of the people of the Pharaoh and Thamud but are rejecting the message here as Allah is encircling them on all sides.

(71) This refers to Miraj (Ascension) for here word ruya does not mean “seeing things in a dream” but seeing things actually with physical eyes. It is quite obvious that if it had been a mere dream and the Prophet (peace be upon him) had presented it as a dream to the disbelievers, there was no reason why it should have become a trial for them. Everyday people see strange dreams and relate them to the people but these dreams never become such a curious thing as to make people scoff at the dreamer and accuse him of making a false claim or of being a mad person.

(72) This cursed tree, Az-zaqqum which has been mentioned in (Ayat 43-44 of Surah Ad-Dukhan), grows at the bottom of Hell and its dwellers shall have to eat from it. This has been called a cursed tree because it is not given to people to eat as a mercy from Allah but as a symbol of His curse so that the accursed people should eat it and get more sore, for this will, so to speak, burn in their bellies like the boiling water.

وَاِذۡ قُلۡنَا لِلۡمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اسۡجُدُوۡا لِاٰدَمَ فَسَجَدُوۡۤا اِلَّاۤ اِبۡلِيۡسَ ؕ قَالَ ءَاَسۡجُدُ لِمَنۡ خَلَقۡتَ طِيۡنًا ۝٦١

(17-61) And recall when We asked the angels (73) to prostrate themselves before Adam; all prostrated themselves except Iblis, (74) who said: "Shall I prostrate myself before him whom You created of clay?"

(73) That is, We showed you such things during the Miraj so that they should have the first hand knowledge of the reality from a truthful and honest man like you and be warned by it to the right way. They, however, began to make fun of you, though We had already warned them through you that their evil ways would force them to eat of the Az-zaqqum. Instead of this they began to scoff at you, saying, just consider the logic of this man. On the one hand, he says that there is an awful fire burning in Hell and, on the other, he says that trees are growing in it.

(74) Please also refer to (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 30-39); (Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 117-122); (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 11- 25); (Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 22); (Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 26-43). This story has been cited here to impress upon the disbelievers that their attitude of arrogance and indifference towards Allah is exactly the same as was adopted by Satan. As a matter of fact, they were following Satan who is the avowed enemy of man, and were being entangled in the snare spread by him who had challenged the progeny of Adam at the very beginning of human history that he would allure and ruin them.

قَالَ اَرَءَيْتَكَ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ كَرَّمْتَ عَلَيَّ لَئِنْ اَخَّرْتَنِ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ لَاَحْتَنِكَنَّ ذُرِّيَّتَهٗٓ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿١٧-٦٢﴾

(17-62) He then continued: "Look! This is he whom You have exalted above me! If you will grant me respite till the Day of Resurrection I shall uproot the whole of his progeny (75) except only a few."

(75) That is, I will uproot them from the high position of divine vicegerency which demands steadfastness in obedience. Their removal from that high position is just like the tearing of a tree from its roots.

قَالَ اذْهَبْ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَاِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَآؤُكُمْ جَزَآءً مَّوْفُوْرًا ﴿١٧-٦٣﴾

(17-63) Thereupon He retorted: "Be gone! Hell shall be the recompense - and a most ample one - of whosoever of them who follows you.

وَاسْتَفْزِزْ مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَاَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِمْ بِخَيْلِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكْهُمْ فِى الْاَمْوَالِ وَالْاَوْلَادِ وَعِدْهُمْ ؕ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا ﴿۶۴﴾

(17-64) Tempt with your call all whom you wish. (76) Muster against them all your forces - your cavalry and your foot soldiers; (77) share with them riches and offspring, (78) and seduce them with rosy promises - and Satan's promise is nothing but a deception (79) -

(76) The literal meaning of the Arabic text is: You may sweep away those whom you find superficial and weak minded.

(77) Here, Satan has been likened to that robber who assaults a habitation with cavalry and infantry and orders them to rob. The cavalry and the infantry of Satan are those jinns and human beings who are engaged in numerous forms and positions in carrying out his mission.

(78) This is a very meaningful sentence which depicts a true and perfect picture of the relationship between Satan and his followers. On the one hand, Satan becomes a partner with the one who follows him in the earning and spending of his money without putting in any labor in it. On the other hand, he does not become a partner in bearing the consequences of his error, crime and sin. But his foolish dupe follows his instructions as if he were a partner, nay, a stronger party. Again in regard to the children of such a man, the father himself bears the whole burden of bringing them up, but under the misguidance of Satan he trains them in wrong and unmoral ways as if he alone was not their father but Satan as well was a partner in it.

(79) Satan entices them with false promises of success and entangles them in the snare of false expectations.

اِنَّ عِبَادِىْ لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ ؕ وَكَفٰى بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيْلًا ﴿۶۵﴾

(17-65) but know well that you will have no power against My servants. (80) Your Lord suffices for them to place their trust in." (81)

(80) It has two meanings: (1) You will have no power over human beings to force them to follow your way. What you are allowed to do is that you may delude them by false counsel and entice them by false promises, but they will have the option to follow or not to follow your counsel. You will not have the power over them to force them to follow your way against their will. (2) You will not succeed in alluring My righteous people. Though the weak minded will be enticed by you. My righteous people who are steadfast in My obedience will not succumb to you.

(81) That is, those who will trust in Allah and believe in His guidance and help, will not stand in need of any other support in their trial by Satan for Allah will guide them, protect them and help them to be safe from his allurements. On the other hand, those people, who will place their trust in their own power or that of any other than Allah, will not come out successful in their trial by Satan.

رَبُّكُمُ الَّذِیۡ یُزۡجِیۡ لَکُمُ الۡفُلۡکَ فِی الۡبَحۡرِ لِتَبۡتَغُوۡا مِنۡ فَضۡلِہٖ ؕ اِنَّہٗ کَانَ بِکُمۡ رَحِیۡمًا ﴿۶۶﴾

(17-66) Your Lord is He Who steers your vessels across the seas (82) that you may seek of His Bounty. (83) He is ever Merciful towards you.

(82) This passage (Ayats 66-72) is closely connected with the previous one. It tells man that if he wants to protect himself from the allurements, temptations and false promises of Satan who has been his avowed enemy from the day of his creation, he should recognize his real Lord and be steadfast in His obedience. Satan intends to prove that man is not worthy of the honor with which Allah has blessed him. Therefore if he follows any other way he cannot escape the snares of Satan.

In this passage, arguments of Tauhid have been put forward in order to make man steadfast in his faith and refrain from shirk.

(83) That is, try to avail of the economic, social, educational and intellectual benefits which are provided by the sea voyages.

وَ اِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِی الۡبَحۡرِ ضَلَّ مَنۡ تَدۡعُوۡنَ اِلَّاۤ اِیَّاہُ ۚ فَلَمَّا نَجّٰىکُمۡ اِلَی
الۡبَرِّ اَعۡرَضۡتُمۡ ؕ وَ کَانَ الۡاِنۡسَانُ کَفُوۡرًا ﴿۶۷﴾

(17-67) When a calamity befalls you on the sea, all those whom you invoke forsake you except Him. (84) But when He delivers you safely to the shore you turn away from Him, for man is indeed most thankless.

(84) That is, this is a proof of the fact that your real nature knows no other Lord than Allah, and you feel in the depths of your hearts that He alone possesses the real power of every gain or loss. Had it not been so, man would never have invoked Allah at the time when he realized that no other helper could remove his misfortune.

اَفَاَمِنۡتُمۡ اَنۡ یَّخۡسِفَ بِکُمۡ جَانِبَ الۡبَرِّ اَوۡ یُرۡسِلَ عَلَیۡکُمۡ حَاصِبًا ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوۡا
لَکُمۡ وَکِیۡلًا ﴿۶۸﴾

(17-68) Do you, then, feel secure against His causing you to be swallowed up by a tract of the earth, or letting loose a deadly whirlwind charged with stones towards you, and there you will find none to protect you?

اَمۡ اَمِنۡتُمۡ اَنۡ یُّعِیۡدَکُمۡ فِیۡہِ تَارَۃً اُخۡرٰی فَیُرۡسِلَ عَلَیۡکُمۡ قَاصِفًا مِّنَ الرِّیۡحِ
فَیُغۡرِقَکُمۡ بِمَا کَفَرۡتُمۡ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوۡا لَکُمۡ عَلَیۡنَا بِہٖ تَبِیۡعًا ﴿۶۹﴾

(17-69) Or do you feel secure that He will not cause you to revert to the sea, and let a tempest loose upon you and then drown you for your ingratitude whereupon you will find none even to inquire of Us what happened to you?

وَ لَقَدۡ كَرَّمۡنَا بَنِیۡۤ اٰدَمَ وَ حَمَلۡنٰهُمۡ فِی الۡبَرِّ وَ الۡبَحۡرِ وَ رَزَقۡنٰهُمۡ مِّنَ الطَّیِّبٰتِ وَ فَضَّلۡنٰهُمۡ عَلٰی کَثِیۡرٍ مِّمَّنۡ خَلَقۡنَا تَفۡضِیۡلًا ﴿۷۰﴾

(17-70) Indeed, We honoured the progeny of Adam, and bore them across land and sea and provided them with good things for their sustenance, and exalted them above many of Our creatures. (85)

(85) That is, it is an obvious fact that the superiority man enjoys over all other beings on the earth and all that is in it, has not been bestowed upon him by a jinn or an angel or a prophet. Most surely that is Allah's blessing and favor. Is it not then the height of folly and ignorance that after having achieved such a high rank, man should bow down before any creature of Allah instead of Him?

یَوۡمَ نَدۡعُوۡا کُلَّ اُنَاسٍۭ بِاِمَامِهِمۡ ۚ فَمَنۡ اُوۡتِیَ کِتٰبَهٗ بِیَمِیۡنِهٖ فَاُولٰٓئِکَ یَقۡرَءُوۡنَ کِتٰبَهُمۡ وَ لَا یُظۡلَمُوۡنَ فَتِیۡلًا ﴿۷۱﴾

(17-71) Then think of the Day We shall summon every community with its leader. Those who are given their Record in their right hand shall read the Record of their deeds (86) and shall not be wronged a whit.

(86) We learn from the Quran that on the Day of Resurrection, the righteous people will be given their records in their right hands and they will be overjoyed to have a look at it and will show it to others. As regards to the wicked people, they will get their records in their left hands and in their shame will try to hide it behind their backs. Please refer to (Surah Al-Haaqqa, Ayats 19-28), (Surah Al-Inshiqaq, Ayats 7-13).

وَ مَنۡ كَانَ فِىۡ هٰذِهٖۤ اَعۡمٰى فَهُوَ فِى الۡاٰخِرَةِ اَعۡمٰى وَ اَضَلُّ سَبِيۡلًا ﴿۷۲﴾

(17-72) Whoever lived in this world as blind shall live as blind in the Life to Come; rather, he will be even farther astray than if he were (just) blind.

وَ اِنۡ كَادُوۡا لَيَفۡتِنُوۡنَكَ عَنِ الَّذِىۡۤ اَوۡحَيۡنَاۤ اِلَيۡكَ لِتَفۡتَرِىَ عَلَيۡنَا غَيۡرَهٗ ۖ وَ اِذًا لَّاتَّخَذُوۡكَ خَلِيۡلًا ﴿۷۳﴾

(17-73) (O Muhammad), they had all but tempted you away from what We have revealed to you that you may invent something else in Our Name. (87) Had you done so, they would have taken you as their trusted friend.

(87) In order to understand the significance of this verse, we should keep in view the circumstances through which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been passing at Makkah during the preceding decade or so. The disbelievers of Makkah were exerting their utmost to turn the Prophet (peace be upon him) away, somehow or other, from his message of Tauhid, which he was presenting, and to force him to make a compromise with shirk and the customs of ignorance. In order to achieve this end, they tempted him in several ways. They practiced deception upon him, and tempted him with greed, held out threats, and raised a storm of false propaganda against him, and persecuted him and applied economic pressure and social boycott against him. In short, they did all that could be done to defeat his resolve.

وَلَوۡلَاۤ اَنۡ ثَبَّتۡنٰكَ لَقَدۡ كِدۡتَّ تَرۡكَنُ اِلَيۡهِمۡ شَيۡـًٔا قَلِيۡلًا ﴿۷۴﴾

(17-74) Indeed, had We not strengthened you, you might have inclined to them a little,

اِذًا لَّاَذَقۡنٰكَ ضِعۡفَ الۡحَيٰوةِ وَ ضِعۡفَ الۡمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيۡنَا نَصِيۡرًا ﴿۷۵﴾

(17-75) whereupon We would have made you taste double (the chastisement) in the world and double (the

chastisement) after death, and then you would have found none to help you against Us. (88)

(88) This review implies two things: (1) If you had compromised with falsehood after recognizing the truth, you might have pleased your degenerate people but would have incurred the wrath of Allah and would have received double chastisement both in this world and in the Hereafter. (2) No man, not even a Messenger of Allah, can fight singlehanded against the deceitful methods of falsehood, unless he receives the succor of Allah. It was the fortitude which Allah had bestowed upon the Prophet (peace be upon him), which helped him to retrain steadfast on the right position he had taken, so that no persecution, howsoever great, could turn him away in the least from that position.

وَاِنْ كَادُوْا لَيَسْتَفِزُّوْنَكَ مِنَ الْاَرْضِ لِيُخْرِجُوْكَ مِنْهَا وَاِذًا لَّا يَلْبَثُوْنَ خِلٰفَكَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿۷۶﴾

(17-76) They were bent upon uprooting you from this land and driving you away from it. But were they to succeed, they would not be able to remain after you more than a little while. (89)

(89) This was a clear prophecy which was made at the time when it appeared to be no more than a mere threat, but it was fulfilled literally in a decade or so. A year after the revelation of this Surah, the disbelievers of Makkah compelled the Prophet (peace be upon him) to leave his home. Then within eight years he entered Makkah as a conqueror, and within two years after this, the entire Arabia was totally freed from mushriks. Then whosoever stayed in that country, he remained there as a Muslim and not as a mushrik.

سُنَّةَ مَنْ قَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ رُّسُلِنَا وَلَا تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيْلًا ﴿۷۷﴾

(17-77) This has been Our Way with the Messengers whom We sent before you. (90) You will find no change in Our Way.

(90) That is, this is how Allah has always dealt with the people who killed or exiled His Messengers. They never survived in the land after this. They were either annihilated by the scourge of Allah or were brought under the sway of an enemy or were subdued by the followers of the Messenger.

اَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ لِدُلُوْكِ الشَّمْسِ اِلٰى غَسَقِ الَّيْلِ وَ قُرْاٰنَ الْفَجْرِ ؕ اِنَّ قُرْاٰنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُوْدًا ﴿۷۸﴾

(17-78) Establish Prayer (91) from the declining of the sun (92) to the darkness of the night; (93) and hold fast to the recitation of the Qur'an at dawn, (94) for the recitation of the Qur'an at dawn is witnessed. (95)

(91) The Muslims have been commanded to establish Salat immediately after the mention of obstacles and adversities. This implies that the perseverance required to face adverse circumstances is obtained by the establishment of Salat.

(92) We have translated the words of the Arabic text into “the declining of the sun.” Though some of the companions and their followers are of the opinion that it means “the sunset”, the majority of them are of the opinion that it means “the declining of the sun from its zenith.” Umar, Ibn Umar, Anas bin Malik, Abu Barza-tal-Aslami, Hasan Basri, Shaabi, Ata, Mujahid and, according to a tradition, Ibn Abbas (May Allah be pleased with them all) are of this opinion and Imam Muhammad Baqir and Imam Jaafar Sadiq also are of the same opinion. Besides this, there are some traditions from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the same effect, though they are not so authentic.

(93) According to some, the original words of the Arabic text mean “darkness of the night”, while others take it to mean “midnight”. If the first opinion is accepted, it will imply “the beginning of the time of the salatul-isha, the isha prayer” and according to the other it will mean “the last limit of the time of salatul-isha.”

(94) The literal meaning of the word fajr is dawn, that is, “the beginning of the morning after the darkness of night.”

Here the “recital of the Quran in the morning” stands for the salatul-fajr, the morning prayer. At some places the Quran has used the word salat for prayer and at other places a particular part of salat for prayer as a whole, e.g. tasbih, hamd, zikr, qayam, ruku, sajud etc. Likewise, here “recital of the Quran at dawn” does not mean the mere recital of the Quran but its recital during the salatul-fajr. Thus, the Quran has also incidentally referred to the different parts of which salat is composed and these guided the Prophet (peace be upon him) to prescribe the definite form of salat in which it is performed by the Muslims.

(95) The recital of the Quran at dawn is witnessed by the angels of Allah to testify it as has been explained in the traditions. Though the angels witness each prayer and each good deed, the special mention of their being witnesses at the time of the recital of the Quran during the salatul-fajr gives it a particular importance. That is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite long passages from the Quran during the salatul-fajr. His example was followed by the companions, and the succeeding Muslim scholars held it to be a desirable thing. In this verse, it has been briefly stated how to establish salat which was made obligatory at the prescribed timings on the occasion of Miraj. It has been ordained that the first prayer is to be offered before the sunrise and the remaining four after the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night. Afterwards Angel Jibril was sent to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to define the limits of the timings of each prayer. According to a tradition of Abu Daud and Tirmizi related by Ibn Abbas, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Jibril led me in the five prayers twice near the Kaabah. On the first day, he offered the Duhr prayer just after the declining of the sun, when the shadow of everything was the shortest. Then he offered the Asr prayer when the shadow of each thing was equal to its own length, then the Maghrib prayer at the time when one breaks hiss fast, and the Isha prayer was offered just at the time when twilight had disappeared, and Fajr prayer at the time when it becomes unlawful to eat and drink anything for the one who

intends to observe a fast. The next day he offered the Dhuhr prayer at the time when the shadow of each thing became equal to its own length and the Asr prayer when the shadow had doubled. The Maghrib prayer was offered as on the previous day and the Isha prayer when one third of the night had passed away, and the Fajr prayer when light had spread all over. After this Jibril turned towards me and said: O Muhammad, these are the timings of salat of the Prophets and the right tunings are between these two extreme limits.
The Quran has also pointed to these five times of Salat on different occasions:

(1) And listen; establish salat at the two ends of the day and in the early parts of the night (Surah At-Tauba, Ayat 114).
(2) And glorify your Lord with His praise before the sunrise (Fajr) and before sunset (Asr) and then glorify Him during the night (Isha) and then at the ends of the day (Fajr, Dhuhr and Maghrib). (Surah Taaha, Ayat 130).
(3) So glorify Allah when it is evening for you (Maghrib), and when it is morning (Fajr). Praise is only for Him in the heavens and the earth and glorify him in the later part of the afternoon (Asr) and in the afternoon (Dhuhr). (Surah Ar-Room, Ayats 17-18).

There is great wisdom in this system of the timings of salat. One of these is to avoid the timings of the worship of the sun worshipers. This is because the sun has always been in every age one of the greatest deities of the mushriks, who worshiped it especially at the time of sunrise and sunset. Therefore, these two times have totally been forbidden for salat. Besides this, they worshiped the sun at the time of its zenith. That is why Islam has ordained that the Muslims should offer their two prayers during the day time after the sun has declined and the Fajr prayer before the sunrise. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself has stated this wisdom of the timings of prayer in several traditions. For instance, in the tradition related by Amar bin Abasah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have replied to a question to this effect: Offer your morning prayer, but refrain from it when the sun is about to rise until it has risen high. For the sun rises

between the horns of Satan and the unbelievers fall prostrate before it at that time.

Then after mentioning the Asr prayer, he said:

After Asr prayer, refrain from any prayer until the sunset, for during that time the sun sets between the horns of Satan and the unbelievers fall prostrate before it.
The rising and the setting of the sun between the horns of Satan is a symbolic expression that has been used in this tradition. This implies that both these times are used by Satan as temptations for the people. This is, as if to say: that Satan is so pleased with the worship of the unbelievers at the time of sunrise and sunset that he appears to carry the sun on his head as a mark of approval. This interpretation of the tradition is based on this remark of the Prophet (peace be upon him): The unbelievers fall prostrate before it.

وَ مِنَ الَّيۡلِ فَتَہَجَّدۡ بِہٖ نَافِلَۃً لَّکَ ۫ عَسٰۤی اَنۡ یَّبۡعَثَکَ رَبُّکَ مَقَامًا مَّحۡمُوۡدًا ﴿۷۹﴾

(17-79) And rise from sleep during the night [96] as well- this is an additional Prayer for you. [97] Possibly your Lord will raise you to an honoured position. [98]

(96) The literal meaning of tahajjud is to rise up by breaking sleep. Therefore, it means: Rise up from sleep after the passing of a part of night and then offer your prayer.

(97) Nafl literally means: Something done in addition to an obligatory duty. This shows that the tahajjud prayer is in addition to the five prescribed prayers.

(98) “Will raise you to an honored position”. You may attain such a high position in this world and in the next world that people from everywhere may be full of praise for you, and you may become a praiseworthy personality. This is, as if to say: Now your opponents are engaged in calling you names and are trying to defame you throughout the country, and have raised a storm of

false accusations against you but that time is not far when the world will ring with the echoes of your praise and in the Hereafter you will become worthy of praise by all creatures. The exaltation of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the high position of intercession on the Day of Resurrection is also a part of that honored position.

وَقُلْ رَّبِّ اَدْخِلْنِيْ مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَّاَخْرِجْنِيْ مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ وَّاجْعَلْ لِّيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ سُلْطٰنًا نَّصِيْرًا ۝٨٠

(17-80) And pray: "My Lord! Cause me to enter wherever it be, with Truth, and cause me to exit, wherever it be, with Truth, (99) and support me with authority from Yourself." (100)

(99) This prayer clearly shows that the time of Hijrah (Migration) had come near. That is why Allah has instructed the Prophet (peace be upon him) to this effect: You should follow the truth wherever and in whatever condition you be. If you migrate from a place, you should migrate for the sake of the truth, and wherever you go, you should go for the sake of the truth.

(100) That is, either grant me power and authority or make some government my helper so that I may use its power to reform the corrupt world. This is because power is required to check indecency and sin and to enforce the law of justice.

Hasan Basri and Qatadah have made the same interpretation of this verse, and the great commentators like Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir have adopted the same. This is supported by a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him): Allah eradicates by the power of government those evils, which are not eradicated by the teachings of the Quran. This is a clear proof that according to Islam, political power is also required to introduce reform, for admonition alone is not enough for this. Besides this, when Allah Himself has taught this prayer to His Prophet (peace be upon him) for the establishment of His way and enforcement of His law, it is not only lawful but desirable to acquire power and those, who consider this to be a worldly thing, are obviously in the wrong. What is really worldliness is that one should desire and acquire power for his own interest. On the contrary, the desire of power for the sake of Allah’s way is not the worship of the world but the worship of God.

وَقُلْ جَآءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ ۭ اِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوْقًا ۝٨١

(17-81) And proclaim: "The Truth has come, and falsehood has vanished. Surely falsehood is ever bound to vanish." (101)

(101) At the time of this declaration, the persecution of the Muslims was at its height. A large number of them had emigrated to Habash, and those who had remained behind were suffering from untold hardships at Makkah and its suburbs: so much so that the life of the Holy Prophet himself was always in danger. Therefore, to all appearances, falsehood was prevailing everywhere and there was no sign to show that the truth would ever overpower falsehood. That is why the disbelievers took it for a boastful talk and scoffed at it when this declaration was trade. But this prophecy of victory did come out true in less than a decade when the Holy Prophet entered the same city of Makkah as a conqueror, and entered the Ka'abah where he made the same declaration while he was breaking the three hundred and sixty idols. According to a Tradition of Bukhari, related by Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas`ud, "On the day of the conquest of Makkah the Holy Prophet went on striking idols and uttering these words: “The Truth has come and falsehood has vanished; for falsehood is a thing that must by its nature vanish. The Truth has come and falsehood will never reappear nor return.”

وَ نُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الۡ قُرۡاٰنِ مَا ہُوَ شِفَآءٌ وَّ رَحۡمَۃٌ لِّلۡمُؤۡ مِنِیۡ نَ ۙ وَ لَا یَزِیۡ دُ الظّٰلِمِیۡنَ اِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿۸۲﴾

(17-82) What We are sending down in the course of revealing the Quran is a healing and a grace for those who have faith; but it adds only to the ruin of the wrong-doers. (102)

(102) That is, those people who make the Quran their guide and their book of law, are favored with the blessing of Allah and are cured of all their mental, psychological, moral and cultural diseases. On the other hand, those wicked people who reject this and turn their back on its guidance, in fact, are unjust to themselves. Therefore, the Quran does not allow them to remain even in that bad condition in which they were before its revelation or its knowledge but involves them in a greater loss than before.

This is because before the revelation of the Quran or their acquaintance with it, they suffered from ignorance alone but when the Quran came before them and made distinct the difference between truth and falsehood, no excuse was left with them to remain in their previous condition of ignorance. After this, if they reject its guidance and persist in their deviation, it is a clear proof that they are not ignorant but workers of iniquity and worshipers of falsehood, which are averse to the truth. For then their position is of the one who, when presented both poison and elixir, makes a choice of poison. Therefore, they themselves are in that cast fully responsible for their deviation and whatever crimes they commit after that, shall incur their full punishment. It is obvious that the consequent loss of wickedness must be far greater than the loss of ignorance. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has summed this up in this concise and comprehensive sentence: The Quran is either an argument in your favor or against you.

وَ اِذَآ اَنۡعَمۡنَا عَلَى الۡاِنۡسَانِ اَعۡرَضَ وَ نَاٰ بِجَانِبِهٖ وَ اِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يَـُٔوۡسًا ﴿۸۳﴾

(17-83) Whenever We bestow favours upon man, he arrogantly turns away and draws aside; and whenever evil visits him, he is in utter despair.

قُلۡ كُلٌّ يَّعۡمَلُ عَلٰى شَاكِلَتِهٖ ؕ فَرَبُّكُمۡ اَعۡلَمُ بِمَنۡ هُوَ اَهۡدٰى سَبِيۡلًا ﴿۸۴﴾

(17-84) Say, (O Prophet): "Each one acts according to his own manner. Your Lord knows well who is best-guided to the Right Path."

وَيَسۡـَٔلُوۡنَكَ عَنِ الرُّوۡحِ ؕ قُلِ الرُّوۡحُ مِنۡ اَمۡرِ رَبِّىۡ وَمَاۤ اُوۡتِيۡتُمۡ مِّنَ الۡعِلۡمِ اِلَّا قَلِيۡلًا ﴿۸۵﴾

(17-85) They ask you about "the spirit". (103) Say: "The spirit descends by the command of my Lord, but you have been given only a little knowledge."

(103) It is generally understood that the Arabic word Rooh stands here for soul as if the people asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the soul of man in regard to its nature, and the answer was that it came by the command of Allah. But we have great hesitation in accepting this meaning for it could be taken only if the verse be isolated from its context; otherwise these words would become quite incoherent for there is no reason why the question about soul should have intervened between the preceding three verses and following verses which deal with the theme of the Quran.

If we read the verse in its context, it becomes quite obvious that here the word Rooh (The Spirit) stands for the angel who brings revelation. This was in answer to the question of the mushriks: Where from do you bring the Quran? as if to say: O Muhammad, these people ask you about the Spirit, that is, the source of the Quran or the means of acquiring it, so tell them: This Spirit comes to me by the command of my Lord but your knowledge is so little that you cannot distinguish between the nature of human words and the divinely revealed words. That is why you suspect that this has been fabricated by some man.

The above interpretation is to be preferred, because it fits in excellently between the preceding and the succeeding verses. This is also supported by the Quran itself: He sends down by His command “The Spirit” to any of His servants He wills so that they should warn the people of the Day, when they shall be assembled together. (Surah Al-Momin, Ayat 15). And likewise, We have sent down “The Spirit” to you by Our command: You did not know what the Book was and what the faith. (Surah Ash-Shurah, Ayat 52).

Besides this, Ibn Abbas, Qatadah and Hasan Basri (may Allah bestow His mercy upon them all) have also adopted the same interpretation. Ibn Jarir has attributed the same thing to Ibn Abbas on the authority of Qatadah, but at the same time he tells a strange thing that Ibn Abbas stated this thing only in secret. Again the author of Ruh-ul-Maani cites these words of Hasan and Qatadah: By Rooh is meant Jibril: the question was about the

nature of his coming down and inspiring the heart of the Prophet (peace be upon him) with Revelation.

وَ لَئِ ن شِن نَا لَنَذ بَنَّ بِالَّذِ اَ حَيۡ نَ اِلَ كَ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ بِ عَلَ يۡ نَا وَكِ يۡلًا ۸۶

(17-86) Had We willed, We could take away what We have revealed to you, then you would find none to help you in recovering it from Us.

اِلَّا رَحۡ مَ ةً مِّ نۡ رَّبِّكَ ؕ اِنَّ فَضۡ لَ هٗ كَانَ عَلَ يۡ كَ كَبِ يۡرًا ۸۷

(17-87) (Whatever you have received) is nothing but grace from your Lord. Indeed His favour to you is great. (104)

(104) Though these words are apparently addressed by the Prophet (peace be upon him), they are in fact meant for the disbelievers who considered the Quran to be either the invention of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself or of some other man, who secretly taught him the Quran. They are being told that this is the Word of Allah, as if to say: Our Prophet has not fabricated the Quran but We have bestowed this on him, and if We take it back from him, the Prophet has no power to invent such a thing nor has any other man the power to help the Prophet to present such a miraculous Book.

قُلۡ لَّئِنِ اجۡ تَمَعَتِ الۡاِ نۡسُ وَ الۡ جِنُّ عَلٰۤ ى اَنۡ يَّ اۡ تُ وۡا بِمِثۡ لِ هٰذَا الۡ قُ رۡاٰنِ لَا يَ اۡ تُ وۡنَ بِمِثۡ لِ هٖ وَلَ وۡ كَانَ بَعۡضُ هُمۡ لِبَعۡ ضٍ ظَهِ يۡرًا ۸۸

(17-88) Say: "Surely, if mankind and jinn were to get together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they will never be able to produce the like of it, howsoever they might help one another." (105)

(105) This challenge occurs at several other places in the Quran: (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 23); (Surah Younus, Ayats 38-39); (Surah Al-Momin, Ayats 13-14); (Surah At-Toor, Ayats 33-34). At all these places, this has been cited as an answer to the charge of the disbelievers that Muhammad (peace be upon him) has himself invented the Quran but is presenting it as Allah’s Word. Besides this, the same has

also been refuted in (Surah Younus, Ayat 16): “Say also, had not Allah willed that I should recite the Quran to you, I could not have recited it to you, nor could I have been able to give you any information about it: already have I lived a lifetime among you before its revelation. Do you not use your common sense?”

Now let us turn to the three arguments contained in these verses as a proof that the Quran is the Word of Allah.

(1) The Quran is such a miracle in regard to its language, style, arguments, themes, topics, teachings and prophecies that it is beyond any human power to produce the like of it, as if to say, "You say that a man has invented this but We challenge that even the whole of mankind combined cannot produce a Book like this: nay, even if the jinns, whom the mushriks worship as deities and whom this Book openly attacks, should come to the help of the disbelievers, they cannot produce a Book like this to refute this challenge.

(2) As regards to the charge that Muhammad (peace be upon him) has himself invented this Book, the Quran refutes their claim, as if to say” Muhammad is one of you and not a foreigner. He has lived among you for forty years before the revelation of the Quran. Did you ever hear words like those of the Quran from him even a day before his claim of Prophethood, or did you ever hear him discussing themes and problems contained in the Quran? If you consider the matter from this point of view, it will become obvious to you that the sudden change which has come about in the language, ideas, information, style and the way of thinking of Muhammad, could not take place without divine guidance.

(3) Can you not see that after the recital of the Quran, he does not disappear but lives among you? You hear other things than the Quran from him. Do you not notice that the distinction between the two different styles of expression is so obvious that no man can successfully adopt the two styles at one and the same time. The distinction can also be noticed, even today, between the language of the Quran and that of the traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Anyone well versed in the Arabic language and literature notices the difference which

is so marked that one can categorically say that these modes of expression cannot belong to one and the same person. (For further reference please also see (E.N. 21 of Surah Younus, Ayat 16).

وَ لَقَ صَرَّ نَا لِلنَّاسِفِۡ ہٰذَا ا ۡقُ اٰنِ مِ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ فَاَبٰۤ ی ۡ کَ ثَرُ النَّاسِ اِلَّا كُفُوۡرًا ۙ﴿۸۹﴾

(17-89) We have explained things for people in this Qur'an in diverse ways to make them understand the Message, yet most people obstinately persist in unbelief.

وَ قَالُ وۡا لَ نۡ نُّ مِنَ لَکَ حَتّٰی تَفۡ جُرَ لَنَا مِنَ ۡ ا ض وَ ۡ نۡۢ ﴿۹۰﴾

(17-90) They said: "We shall not accept your Message until you cause a spring to gush forth for us from the earth;

اَوۡ تَکُوۡنَ لَکَ جَنَّ ۡ مِّ نَّخِ لٍ وَّ عِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ ا لَنَ خِلٰلَ ا تَ غۡجِیۡرًا ۙ﴿۹۱﴾

(17-91) or that there be a garden of palms and vines for you and then you cause rivers to abundantly flow forth through them;

اَوۡ تُ سۡ قِطَ السَّمَآءَ کَمَا زَعَ تَ عَلَیۡ نَا کِسَفًا اَوۡ تَ ۡتِیَ بِاللّٰ وَ لۡمَلٰٓئِکَ قَبِیۡ لًا ﴿۹۲﴾

(17-92) or cause the sky to fall on us in pieces as you claimed, or bring Allah and the angels before us, face to face;

اَوۡ یَکُوۡ نَ لَکَ یۡ تٌ مِّ زُخۡرُفٍ اَوۡ تَ ۡ قٰی فِی السَّمَآءِ ؕ وَ لَنۡ ؤۡمِنَ لِرُقِیِّکَ حَتّٰی تُنَزِّلَ عَلَیۡ نَا کِتٰبًا نَّقۡ رَؤُ ؕ قُلۡ سُبۡ حَانَ رَبِّیۡ ۡ لۡ کُ ۡ اِلَّا بَشَرًا رَّسُوۡلًا ﴿۹۳﴾

(17-93) or that there come to be for you a house of gold, or that you ascend to the sky - though we shall not believe in your ascension (to the sky) - until you bring down a book for us that we can read." Say to them, (O Muhammad): "Holy is my Lord! Am I anything else than a human being, who bears a Message (106) (from Allah)?"

(106) This is the second answer to the demand of the disbelievers for a miracle. The first answer is contained in (Ayat 59). The eloquence of this concise answer is above praise: You demand from me that I should cause a spring to gush forth, or in the twinkling of an eye should bring into being a garden in full bloom with canals flowing in it: or I should cause the heaven to fall into pieces on those of you who are rejecting the message: or I should cause to build a furnished palace of gold: or I should call Allah and the angels to stand before you and testify to this effect: We Ourselves have sent down Muhammad as Our Messenger: or I should go up to the sky in your presence and bring down, addressed to you, the letter of authority of my appointment duly signed by Allah so that you may touch it with your hands and read it with your own eyes. The concise answer to these big demands was this: My Lord be glorified! Have I ever claimed to be anything more than a human Messenger? It may be expanded like this: O people, have I claimed to be God that you are demanding such things from me? Did I ever say that I am all powerful and am ruling over the earth and the Heavens? From the very first day my claim has been that I am a human being who is bringing the Message from God. Therefore, if you want to judge the authenticity of my claim, you may judge it from my message. If you are convinced that it is based on the truth and is absolutely rational, then you should believe in it without making foolish demands. On the other hand, if you find any defect in it, you may reject it. If you want to test whether my claim is based on truth, you should judge it by the standard of my conduct and morals as a human being and my mission. Is it not a folly that, instead of this, you are demanding from me to cleave the earth and cause the sky to fall? Is there any connection whatsoever of Prophethood with things like that.

وَ مَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ اَنۡ يُّؤۡمِنُوۡۤا اِذۡ جَآءَهُمُ الۡهُدٰۤى اِلَّاۤ اَنۡ قَالُوۡۤا اَبَعَثَ اللّٰهُ بَشَرًا رَّسُوۡلًا ﴿۹۴﴾

(17-94) Whenever Guidance came to people, nothing prevented them from believing except that they said: "Has Allah sent a human being as a Messenger?" (107)

(107) It implies that this misunderstanding has always been common among the ignorant people of every age that a human being could not be a Messenger of Allah: They rejected a Messenger just because he was a human being and took his meals and had wife and children like themselves. In contrast to this, after the passage of the time the credulous followers of a Messenger began to claim that he was not a human being at all because he was a Messenger. That is why some people made their Messenger their God, others the son of God and still others the incarnation of God. In short, the ignorant people had never been able to understand that a human being could be a Messenger of Allah.

قُل لَّوۡ كَانَ فِى ٱلۡأَرۡضِ مَلَٰٓئِكَةٌ يَمۡشُونَ مُطۡمَئِنِّينَ لَنَزَّلۡنَا عَلَيۡهِم مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَلَكًا رَّسُولًا ٩٥

(17-95) Say: "Had angels been walking about in peace on the earth, We would surely have sent to them an angel from the heavens as Messenger." (108)

(108) This is to say that Messenger does not merely convey the message but is sent to reform human life in accordance with it. He has to apply the principles of the message to the circumstances of human beings and has himself to demonstrate practically those principles. Moreover, he has to remove the misunderstandings of those people who try to listen to and understand his message. Besides this, he has to organize and train the believers to create a society based on the teachings of his message. He has to struggle against those who reject and oppose his message in order to subdue those powers that are bent upon corruption, and bring about that reformation for which Allah has sent His Messenger. As all these things have to be done in a society of human beings only a human Messenger can perform the mission. If an angel had been sent as a Messenger, the most he could have done was to convey the message, for he could not live among human beings and share their life and problems in order to reform them. It is thus clear that a human Messenger only could be suitable for this purpose.

لِۡ كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيدًا ۢ بَيۡنِىۡ وَبَيۡنَكُمۡ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهٖ خَبِيرًا ۢ بَصِيرًا ۹۶

(17-96) Tell them, (O Prophet): "Allah suffices as a witness between me and you. Allah is well aware and fully observes everything pertaining to His servants." (109)

(109) That is, Allah is fully aware of all my efforts which I am sending in order to reform you, and He is fully aware of the efforts you are making against my mission. His witness is sufficient because He will pass the final judgment.

وَمَنۡ يَّهۡدِ اللّٰهُ فَهُوَ الۡمُهۡتَدِ ۚ وَمَنۡ يُّضۡلِلۡ فَلَنۡ تَجِدَ لَهُمۡ اَوۡلِيَآءَ مِنۡ دُوۡنِهٖ ؕ وَنَحۡشُرُهُمۡ يَوۡمَ الۡقِيٰمَةِ عَلٰى وُجُوۡهِهِمۡ عُمۡيًا وَّبُكۡمًا وَّصُمًّا ؕ مَاۡوٰٮهُمۡ جَهَنَّمُ ؕ كُلَّمَا خَبَتۡ زِدۡنٰهُمۡ سَعِيرًا ۹۷

(17-97) Whomsoever Allah guides is rightly guided; and whomsoever Allah lets go astray, you shall find none - apart from Him (110) - who could protect him. We shall muster them all on the Day of Resurrection, on their faces - blind and dumb and deaf. (111) Hell shall be their refuge. Every time its Fire subsides, We will intensify for them its flame.

(110) In this verse, the Quran has enunciated a divine principle. Allah guides to the right way only that person who intends to follow His guidance, and lets go astray that person who intends to go astray. Thereafter none is able to bring back to the right way the one against whom Allah has closed the door of guidance because of his own persistent deviation and obduracy. It is obvious that if a man turns his back against the truth and rests content with falsehoods, there is no power in the world to make him turn away from falsehood and come to the truth.

This is because after this depravity Allah provides for that wicked person such means as increase his aversion to truth and his love for falsehood.

(111) On the Day of Resurrection, they will be raised up blind, dumb and deaf because they behaved like such people in this

world and would not see the truth nor listen to the truth nor speak the truth.

ذٰلِكَ جَزَآؤُهُم بِاَنَّهُم كَفَرُوا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَ قَالُوۡۤا ءَاِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَّ رُفَاتًا ءَاِنَّا لَمَبۡعُوثُوۡنَ خَلۡقًا جَدِيۡدًا ﴿۹۸﴾

(17-98) That will be their recompense because they disbelieved in Our Signs and said: "What, when we shall be reduced to bones and particles (of dust), shall we be raised again as a new creation?"

اَوَلَمۡ يَرَوۡا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ الَّذِىۡ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضَ قَادِرٌ عَلٰۤى اَنۡ يَّخۡلُقَ مِثۡلَهُمۡ وَ جَعَلَ لَهُمۡ اَجَلًا لَّا رَيۡبَ فِيۡهِ ؕ فَاَبَى الظّٰلِمُوۡنَ اِلَّا كُفُوۡرًا ﴿۹۹﴾

(17-99) Have they not perceived that Allah, Who has created the heavens and the earth, has the power to create the like of them? He has fixed a term for them about which there is no doubt. And yet the wrong-doers obstinately persist in unbelief.

قُلۡ لَّوۡ اَنۡتُمۡ تَمۡلِكُوۡنَ خَزَآئِنَ رَحۡمَةِ رَبِّىۡۤ اِذًا لَّاَمۡسَكۡتُمۡ خَشۡيَةَ الۡاِنۡفَاقِ ؕ وَ كَانَ الۡاِنۡسَانُ قَتُوۡرًا ﴿۱۰۰﴾٪

(17-100) Tell them, (O Prophet): "Even if you owned the treasures of my Lord's Mercy you would have held them back for fear of spending them." Man is indeed ever niggardly. (112)

(112) This verse also suggests the same thing that has already been mentioned in Ayat 55. This hints at the real psychological reason why the disbelievers of Makkah were not inclined to accept Muhammad (peace be upon him), their contemporary, as a Prophet. For thus they would have to acknowledge his superiority and one does not easily acknowledge the superiority of his contemporary. This verse may be expanded like this: Those people who are so narrow minded that they are unwilling even to acknowledge the real superiority of another, cannot be expected to be generous in spending on others, if they possessed the keys of the treasures of Allah’s blessings.

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسٰى تِسْعَ اٰيٰتٍۢ بَيِّنٰتٍ فَسْـَٔلْ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اِذْ جَآءَهُمْ فَقَالَ لَهٗ فِرْعَوْنُ اِنِّيْ لَاَظُنُّكَ يٰمُوْسٰى مَسْحُوْرًا ﴿١٠١﴾

(17-101) We granted Moses nine clear signs. (113) Ask the Children of Israel about that: when these signs came forth, Pharaoh said to him: "Moses, I think that you are bewitched." (114)

(113) It should be noted that this is the third answer to the demand of the disbelievers of Makkah for signs. They said: We will not believe in you until you do this and do that before our eyes. In answer to this demand, they are being warned: Nine clear signs, like the ones you are demanding, were shown one after the other to Pharaoh before you and you also know well what he said, simply because he did not want to believe in Moses (peace be upon him); you also know that when he rejected the Prophet, even after seeing the signs, We drowned him.

The nine signs mentioned here have also been mentioned in (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 133). These were: (1) The staff which turned into a monster snake. (2) Moses' bright hand which shone like the sun. (3) The public defeat of the sorcery of the magicians. (4) Universal famine. (5) Storm. (6) Locusts. (7) Lice. (8) Frogs. (9) Rain of blood.

(114) This has been particularly mentioned here because the mushriks of Makkah attributed the same epithet to the Prophet (peace be upon him) as contained in(Ayat 47). These wrong-doers say to each other: The man, you are following, is a bewitched person. Here they are being warned that they were following the attitude of Pharaoh, who gave the same epithet to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him).

In this connection, we want to make a brief reference to an objection which has been raised by the modernists against a tradition according to which the Prophet (peace be upon him) once came under the influence of sorcery. They say that this tradition confirms that the epithet "bewitched" applied to the Prophet by the Quraish was correct, whereas the Quran refutes

this as false. They forget that the same argument could be applied to the case of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) whom Pharaoh accused of being bewitched. For the Quran says, in (Surah Taaha, Ayats 66- 67): When the magicians threw down their cords and rods (instruments of their sorcery), it seemed to Moses as if they were running, as a result of which Moses (peace be upon him) conceived in his mind a sort of fear. If the words of the tradition were to be considered against the Quran, do not these words of the Quran contradict its own words that the charge of Moses (peace be upon him) being bewitched was false? Do these modernists consider this verse to confirm Pharaoh's charge?

As a matter of fact, these objectors do not know the sense in which the disbelievers of Makkah and Pharaoh called the Prophet and Prophet Moses (peace be upon them) bewitched. What they meant was that some enemy had so bewitched them that they had lost their senses and so in their insanity claimed to be prophets and delivered a curious message. The Quran refutes this charge as false. As regards the temporary influence of magic on same person or a part of him has not been denied, for the influence of magic is like the effect produced on a person who is hit with a stone. The fact that some prophet was temporarily influenced by magic, does not in any way affect his prophethood adversely. Just as poison produced its effect on a prophet, or a prophet was wounded, so a prophet could also temporarily come under the influence of magic. Such a temporary magic could not cause any defect in his prophethood. God forbid, had magic produced any adverse effect on his reasoning and thinking faculties, one might have been skeptical about the authenticity of the message. And when Pharaoh and the disbelievers of Makkah said that Prophet Moses and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them) were bewitched, they meant that they had lost their senses under the influence of magic. The Quran refutes this charge brought against the Prophets.

قَالَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَآ اَنْزَلَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ اِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ بَصَآئِرَ وَاِنِّیْ لَاَظُنُّكَ یٰفِرْعَوْنُ مَثْبُوْرًا ﴿۱۰۲﴾

(17-102) Moses replied: "You know well that no one but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent these as eye-opening proofs. (116) I truly think, O Pharaoh, that you are indeed doomed." (117)

(116) That is, I am not a bewitched man but you are indeed a doomed person. As you have been persistent in your disbelief even after seeing such obvious divine signs, you are surety doomed to destruction.

(117) This part of the story of Pharaoh has been related here because it applied exactly to the mushriks of Makkah who were doing their best to uproot the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the believers from the land of Arabia. This story, so to say, tells them: Pharaoh resolved to uproot Moses (peace be upon him) and the Israelites but was himself completely annihilated along with his followers. But Moses (peace be upon him) and his followers settled down in the land. Likewise, if you persist on the same way, you will surely meet with the same end.

فَأَرَادَ أَن يَسْتَفِزَّهُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُ وَمَن مَّعَهُ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٠٣﴾

(17:103) At last Pharaoh decided to uproot Moses and the Children of Israel from the land, but We drowned him together with all who were with him;

وَقُلْنَا مِن بَعْدِهِ لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اسْكُنُوا الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ جِئْنَا بِكُمْ لَفِيفًا ﴿١٠٤﴾

(17-104) and thereafter We said to the Children of Israel: "Now dwell in the land, (117) but when the promised time of the Hereafter comes, We shall bring you all together."

(117) This part of the story of Pharaoh has been related here because it applied exactly to the mushriks of Makkah who were doing their best to uproot the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the believers from the land of Arabia. This story, so to say, tells them: Pharaoh resolved to uproot Moses (peace be upon him) and the Israelites but was himself completely annihilated along with

his followers. But Moses (peace be upon him) and his followers settled down in the land. Likewise, if you persist on the same way, you will surely meet with the same end.

وَ بِا لۡحَقِّ اَ نۡزَلۡ نٰهُ وَ بِا لۡحَقِّ نَزَلَ ؕ وَ مَاۤ اَ رۡسَلۡ نٰكَ اِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَّ نَذِيۡرًا ۙ ﴿۱۰۵﴾

(17-105) We have sent down the Qur'an with the Truth, and it is with the Truth that it has descended. And We have not sent you but to proclaim good news and to warn. (118)

(118) That is, it is not your responsibility to cause, in a supernatural manner, springs to gush forth or gardens to grow or pieces of the sky to fall down in order to convince those people who do not judge the Quran by its teachings nor decide between the truth and falsehood on merit. As the Quran has been sent down with truth, you should present it before the people and tell them plainly that the one, who believes, does so for his own good and the one who rejects it, does it at his own peril.

وَ قُرۡاٰنًا فَرَقۡنٰهُ لِتَقۡرَاَهٗ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلٰى مُكۡثٍ وَّ نَزَّلۡنٰهُ تَنۡزِيۡلًا ﴿۱۰۶﴾

(17-106) We have revealed the Quran in parts that you may recite it to people slowly and with deliberation; and (for that reason) We have revealed it gradually (119) (to suit particular occasions).

(119) This is an answer to this objection: Why has not Allah sent down His message as a whole? Why is He sending it piecemeal? Has Allah any need to think deliberately what to send down? As the answer to this objection has been given in (Surah An-Nahal, Ayats 101-102) and in the Explanatory Notes 104-106 added to them.

قُلۡ اٰمِنُوۡا بِهٖۤ اَوۡ لَا تُؤۡمِنُوۡا ؕ اِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ اُوۡتُوا الۡعِلۡمَ مِنۡ قَبۡلِهٖۤ اِذَا يُتۡلٰى عَلَيۡهِمۡ يَخِرُّوۡنَ لِلۡاَذۡقَانِ سُجَّدًا ۙ ﴿۱۰۷﴾

(17-107) Tell them, (O Prophet): "Whether you believe in it, or do not believe," but when it is recited to those

who were given the knowledge before its revelation, (120) they fall down upon their faces in prostration

(120) This refers to those people of the Book who were well versed in the Scriptures and could judge them from their themes and wording.

وَّ يَقُ ولُ نَ سُبۡحٰنَ رَبِّنَاۤ اِ كَانَ وَعۡ دُ رَبِّنَا لَمَفۡعُوۡلًا ١٠٨

(17-108) and say: "Glory be to our Lord. Surely the promise of our Lord was bound to be fulfilled."

وَ يَخِرُّوۡنَ لِلۡاَذۡقَانِ يَبۡكُوۡنَ وَ يَزِيۡدُهُمۡ خُشُوۡعًا ١٠٩

(17-109) And they fall down upon their faces, weeping, and their humility (121) increases when (the Qur'an) is recited to them. (122)

(121) That is, when they listen to the Quran, they at once recognize that its bearer is the promised Prophet mentioned in the Books of the former Prophets.

(122) This attitude of the righteous people of the Book has been mentioned at several places in the Quran, e.g., (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayats 113-114, 199), (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayats: 83-84).

قُلِ ادۡعُوا اللّٰهَ اَوِ ادۡعُوا الرَّحۡمٰنَ ؕ اَيًّا مَّا تَدۡعُوۡا فَلَهُ الۡاَسۡمَآءُ الۡحُسۡنٰى ۚ وَ لَا تَجۡهَرۡ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَ لَا تُخَافِتۡ بِهَا وَ ابۡتَغِ بَيۡنَ ذٰلِكَ سَبِيۡلًا ١١٠

(17-110) Say to them (O Prophet!): "Call upon Him as Allah or call upon Him as al-Rahman; call Him by whichever name you will, all His names are beautiful. (123) Neither offer your Prayer in too loud a voice, nor in a voice too low; but follow a middle course." (124)

(123) This is the answer to another objection of the disbelievers. They said: We have heard the name Allah for the Creator but where from have you brought the name Rahman? This was because the name "Rahman" was not used for Allah and they did not like it.

(124) This instruction was given at Makkah. Ibn Abbas relates that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) or his companions offered their prayers, they recited the Quran in a loud voice. At this the disbelievers would raise a hue and cry and often called them names. Therefore, they were enjoined that they should

neither say their prayers in such a loud voice as might incite the disbelievers nor should they say it in such a low voice that their own companions might not hear it. This instruction was discontinued under the changed conditions at Al-Madinah. However, if the Muslims have to face the same conditions, at any place or at any time, they should observe the same instruction.

وَقُلِ الۡحَمۡدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِىۡ لَمۡ يَتَّخِذۡ وَلَدًا وَّلَمۡ يَكُنۡ لَّهٗ شَرِيۡكٌ فِى الۡمُلۡكِ وَلَمۡ يَكُنۡ لَّهٗ وَلِىٌّ مِّنَ الذُّلِّ وَكَبِّرۡهُ تَكۡبِيۡرًا ﴿۱۱۱﴾

(17-111) And say: "All praise be to Allah Who has neither taken to Himself a son, nor has He any partner in His kingdom, nor does He need anyone, out of weakness, to protect Him." (125) So glorify Him in a manner worthy of His glory.

(125) A subtle sarcasm is implied in the sentence. The mushriks believed that Allah had appointed assistants and deputies for the administration of His kingdom. Obviously this meant that Allah was helpless and powerless to carry out the administration of His kingdom. Therefore, He needed supporters to help Him in the work of His Godhead. This sentence negates their false creeds, saying: He does not stand in need of any gods and saints in order to delegate to them the different departments of His Godhead or make them governors in different parts of His kingdom.